

## About the tool

Talking with school about your child's support needs can sometimes feel difficult, especially when you are raising a concern or trying to resolve an ongoing issue.

The Four-Part Conversation Framework provides a simple structure that can help you explain a concern clearly while keeping the conversation focused on solutions.

It is based on a communication approach developed by psychologist Marshall Rosenberg and is commonly used in conflict resolution and collaborative problem solving.

## When to use the tool

- raising a concern about something happening at school
- following up on an issue that has not yet been resolved
- writing an email about a concern

## How to use it

1. Describe what you've noticed.
2. Explain how the situation is affecting your child.
3. Identify what your child may need.
4. Suggest a practical next step.
5. Use the framework in conversations or emails.

## The Four-Part Framework

### Step 1 — Observation

#### What have you noticed?

Start with a clear observation about what's been happening or what your child has experienced. Focus on facts rather than assumptions.

#### Examples:

*"I've noticed my child wasn't included in the last two excursions."*  
*"My child has been telling us they are sitting alone at lunch."*  
*"We've noticed mornings before school have become much harder recently."*

### Step 2 — Impact

#### Why does this matter?

Explain how the situation is affecting your child's learning, wellbeing or participation. This helps others understand why the issue is important.

#### Examples:

*"They feel really left out and confused."*  
*"It seems to be affecting their confidence at school."*  
*"They've started saying they don't want to come to school."*

### Step 3 — Need

#### What does your child need?

This step helps shift the conversation toward solutions rather than blame. Needs might include inclusion, support, predictability, understanding or safety.

#### Examples:

*"My child needs support to feel included during playground time."*  
*"They might need clearer routines when moving between activities."*  
*"They may need help feeling comfortable joining group activities."*

### Step 4 — Request

#### What could help next?

Finish with a clear and practical request.

#### Examples:

*"Could we meet to talk about what might help?"*  
*"Could the task be broken down into smaller steps to see if that helps?"*  
*"Could we check in again in a few weeks to see how things are going?"*

### Putting the framework together

Here is an example showing how the four parts can come together in a conversation.

*"Sam has told me that he's been sitting alone at lunch (observation). I'm worried this might be affecting his confidence and how he's feeling about school (impact). It would really help if he had some support to feel more included with other students (need). Could we talk about a few ideas that might help him connect with other children during lunch? (request)"*

## AI Prompts for the Four-Part Framework

Some parents use AI tools to help organise their thoughts or draft messages when preparing to speak with their child's school.

AI tools can be helpful, but responses should always be reviewed and adjusted so they reflect what you want to say.

You can copy and paste the prompts below into an AI tool such as ChatGPT and replace the blank sections with details about your situation.

### Turn my notes into a clear message

#### Prompt:

Help me turn these notes into a clear and respectful message for my child's school using this structure:

Observation → Impact → Need → Request

Please keep the tone collaborative and focused on supporting my child.

Notes:

[insert notes]

Please write the message in 2 – 4 clear sentences that I could say in a meeting or include in an email.

### Help me prepare what to say in a meeting

#### Prompt:

I have a meeting with my child's school and want to explain a concern clearly and calmly.

Please help me structure what I want to say using this structure:

Observation → Impact → Need → Request

Situation:

[describe situation]

Please keep the wording respectful, collaborative and focused on supporting my child.

### Rewrite an email using the framework

#### Prompt:

Please rewrite this email using the structure:

Observation → Impact → Need → Request

The tone should be respectful, collaborative, and focused on working together with the school to support my child.

Email:

[paste email]

Please keep the message clear and concise.

## Turn a long explanation into a clear message

### Prompt:

I have written a long explanation about a concern with my child's school.

Please help me turn this into a short and clear message using the structure:

Observation → Impact → Need → Request

My explanation:

[paste notes]

Please keep the message calm, respectful and solution-focused.