

# P4K ELEMENTARY CONVERSATION GUIDE

As a Goal Buddy you may find that some youth actively engage in conversation while others require more coaxing. Here are some ways to guide the conversation for a positive outcome.

## YOUTH WHO DO NOT ENGAGE

Youth who do not engage in conversation right away may need more time and gentle nudging to actively participate in conversations.

Note that it is normal for youth to require a few visits with you before feeling comfortable conversing. For these youth, consistency is key.

As you become a familiar person and gain mutual trust, the conversations will flow more easily. Until then, try the following tips to help you along:

- Keep to 'safe' topics like reading/life skill goals and other school related topics. Getting too personal too fast can cause youth to shut down conversations quickly.
- Use open ended questions to encourage youth to provide a more detailed answer.
- Ask questions that are easy for the youth to answer to diminish conversational anxiety. Most youth should be able to, and are willing to, answer questions about themselves. What books they like to read, what they like to do in their free time, and their favorite foods, color, season, etc. These types of questions easily lead into more follow up questions.

## YOUTH WHO OVERLY ENGAGE

Youth who overly engage in conversation usually make conversing rather effortless. While this is positive for strong relationship building, it can cause chaos with time keeping and staying on schedule. If you need help closing the conversation without hurting feelings, try the following tips:

- State the expectation at the beginning of the conversation. Let the youth know that you only have a few minutes to spend together so when you close the conversation, it's expected and not a surprise.
- Give a one minute warning. For youth that want to share more information beyond their reading/life skill goals, providing the last minute for open conversation is a great way to give them voice and work on building the relationship.
- If the first two tips do not work and you need to close the conversation, let the youth know you are ending the conversation to be fair to the others. It's important that the youth know the conversation is ending out of necessity and not because of disinterest on your part.

