

Birth to Five

This guide offers suggestions for presenting ***Language Modeling and Conversations: Thick and Thin Conversations, Birth to Five***. This in-service suite is intended for a birth to five, center-based audience. It includes a PowerPoint presentation and supporting materials. Please use and adapt as needed.

Handouts for *Tips for Teachers*, *Tools for Teachers*, *Helpful Resources*, and the learning activities include versions with information that is specific to infants and toddlers.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- PowerPoint presentation (21 slides)
- Optional slide: *Say HELLO*
- Projector and audio equipment
- Learning Activities:
 - » *Video Review: Thick and Thin—Toddlers* (with slide)
 - » *Video Review: Snow Day—Preschoolers* (with slide)
 - » *Conversation Practice Vignettes—Infants and Toddlers*
 - » *Conversation Practice Vignettes—Preschoolers*
 - » *Developing an Action Plan*
- Tips for Teachers
- Tools for Teachers
- Tools for Supervisors
- Helpful Resources
- Flip chart or similar large paper, and markers for writing participant ideas

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- This presentation focuses specifically on how to increase the length and quality of conversations with children, including young infants and toddlers.
- This is one in a series of in-service suites called *Language Modeling and Conversations*.
- Learning activities offer participants opportunities to discuss and practice strategies by viewing videos, role play, and planning for conversations with children.
- HELLO is an overarching framework that links and organizes the five in-service suites on *Language Modeling and Conversations*. HELLO is described in the optional slide at the end of this document, as well as in the *Tools for Teachers* and *Tools for Supervisors* handouts. These three documents appear in each of the five in-service suites.

NOTE

The Importance of Home Language

Because language and culture are closely related, one of the primary tasks for young children is to learn their home language(s). This is an important concept to share during training. For more specific information on promoting conversations that are culturally and linguistically responsive, refer to these resources:

Revisiting and Updating the Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs Serving Children Birth to Five

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/Dual%20Language%20Learners/pdm/responsiveness/revisiting.htm>

News You Can Use: Foundations of School Readiness: Language and Literacy

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/docs/nycu-school-readiness-language-literacy.pdf>

Strategies for Supporting All Dual Language Learners, from the National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/fcp/docs/dll-strategies.pdf>





SLIDE 1: THICK AND THIN CONVERSATIONS, BIRTH TO FIVE

Introductions:

- Begin the training by giving participants background information about yourself.
- Provide an opportunity for participants to introduce themselves (where they are working, their current role, etc.).
- Ask participants to share an activity or routine from their own lives where they are able to have long conversations with family or friends (meals, bedtime, car trips, etc.).

Introduce the topic.

Thick and Thin Conversations, Birth to Five, focuses on why it is important for adults to increase the quality and length of their conversations with infants, toddlers, and preschool children.

Points to highlight:

- During the infant and toddler years, adults lay the foundation for thick conversations by encouraging back-and-forth exchanges, extending children's communications, focusing on everyday routines and experiences, and promoting connections and understandings.
- In addition to conversing with words, infants and toddlers communicate through facial expressions, gestures, body language, and vocalizations.
- Engaging children in conversations, including young infants and toddlers, fosters their language, cognitive, and social development.
- These benefits are greatly impacted by the quality of what is said in a conversation.





SLIDE 2: NCQTL'S FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE EVERYDAY PRACTICE

Introduce NCQTL.

The four components of the House Framework support school readiness for all children:

- The foundation represents effective and engaging interactions and environments.
- The pillars represent research-based curricula and teaching practices and ongoing child assessment.
- The roof represents highly individualized teaching and learning.
- All components interact with each other and are essential to effective practices.

This in-service suite is part of the *foundation* of the House. Meaningful conversations are a critical component for creating engaging interactions and classroom environments.



SLIDE 3: OBJECTIVES

- To define extended conversations
- To identify the benefits for children and teachers
- To learn what makes a “thick,” extended conversation

OPTIONAL SLIDE PPT

The optional slide, *Say HELLO*, provides a visual overview that represents the five in-service suites on *Language Modeling and Conversations*. Show this slide if you plan to present all five of these in-service suites. Presenter notes for the optional slide are provided at the end of this document.



WHAT ARE EXTENDED CONVERSATIONS?



Extended conversations are **rich, back-and-forth exchanges** that help children develop more complex language and thinking skills.

SLIDE 4: WHAT ARE EXTENDED CONVERSATIONS?

Extended conversations are rich, “thick,” multiple back-and-forth exchanges that help children develop more complex language, thinking skills, and social skills.

For infants and toddlers, adults take on a more active role to help children take multiple turns to continue a conversation and ensure that they have frequent opportunities to interact.

- **Rich exchanges:** A conversation where the adult uses a varied vocabulary and complex sentence forms, and the infant or toddler responds through facial expressions, gestures, body language, vocalizations, and increasingly complex words, phrases, and sentences

For preschool children, extended conversations are rich back-and-forth exchanges that also help them develop more complex language and thinking skills.

- **Rich exchanges:** A conversation that includes a varied vocabulary and complex sentence forms

For all children, **back-and-forth-exchanges** are conversations with equal communication, verbal or non-verbal, between the child and adult (taking turns). The adult uses active listening and waits for the child to respond before continuing.



WHAT DO EXTENDED CONVERSATIONS LOOK LIKE?



In extended conversations with children, teachers:

- Take into account children's interests and experiences.
- Provide opportunities to scaffold language development.
- Expand on children's ideas and actions.

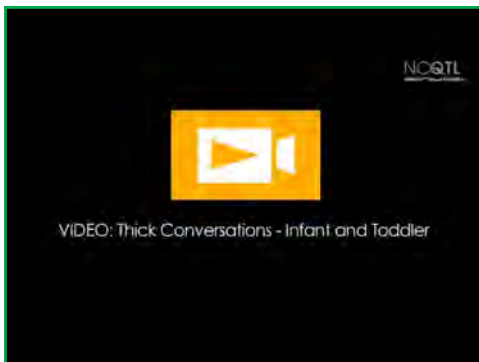
SLIDE 5: WHAT DO EXTENDED CONVERSATIONS LOOK LIKE?

Key elements of extended conversations:

- Take into account the children's interests and experiences:
 - » Focus on topics children are interested in
 - » Focus on experiences children have had and can relate to
- Provide opportunities to scaffold language development:
 - » Individualize the conversation to the child
 - » Use the conversation to provide children with "just the right amount of help" (scaffolding) to support clear communication
- Expand on children's ideas and actions:
 - » Focus on what children are currently doing or thinking about
 - » Provide comments and questions to help children think a little deeper about their ideas or actions

NOTE

Scaffolding is when adults help children build on what they're able to do—by giving them varying types of support, and varying levels of support, in response to their needs.



Length of video: Approximately 1 minute and 6 seconds

SLIDE 6: VIDEO: THICK CONVERSATIONS— INFANT AND TODDLER

Introduce the video.

This video provides two examples of extended conversations. In the first example, a mother talks with her infant as she changes the child's diaper. In the second example, the teacher discusses a book with a toddler.

VIDEO 

DISCUSSION 

Ask participants how the adults are able to extend the conversation with each child.





Length of video: Approximately 1 minute and 3 seconds

SLIDE 7: VIDEO: THICK CONVERSATIONS— PRESCHOOLERS

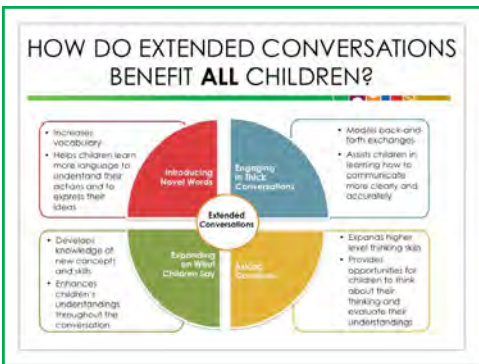
Introduce the video.

This video provides two examples of extended conversations between teachers and preschool children during dramatic play and storybook reading.

VIDEO 

DISCUSSION 

Ask participants how these examples illustrate an extended conversation with preschool children.



SLIDE 8: HOW DO EXTENDED CONVERSATIONS BENEFIT ALL CHILDREN?

Extended conversations benefit children's:

- Language development.
- Cognitive development.
- Social and emotional development.

For all children, extended conversations:

- **Provide models** of appropriate conversation skills.
- **Support** higher-level thinking through meaningful questioning.
- **Expand** their communications and language by including new concepts and skills.
- **Increase** their receptive and expressive vocabularies by introducing new words and concepts.

The graphic on this slide illustrates the four components of extended conversations:

- Engaging in thick conversations
- Asking questions
- Expanding on what children say
- Introducing novel words

This presentation focuses on the first component, **engaging children in thick conversations**.

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When adults engage in thick conversations with children, they:

- Model back-and-forth exchanges.
- Help children learn how to communicate more clearly and accurately.

For infants and toddlers, this means that adults respond in ways that acknowledge that children's thoughts, feelings, and ideas have value. Over time and with adult support, infants and toddlers will begin to use gestures, sounds, and words to express their thoughts, feelings, and ideas more clearly and accurately.

Preschool children gradually become able to use more varied, complex vocabulary and sentences to communicate concepts and connect ideas.

HOW DO EXTENDED CONVERSATIONS WITH CHILDREN BENEFIT TEACHERS?



- Show what children understand and are interested in
- Help with meaningful curriculum planning
- Provide informal assessment opportunities to determine children's:
 - Current skills
 - Future needs
 - Ongoing learning

SLIDE 9: HOW DO EXTENDED CONVERSATIONS WITH CHILDREN BENEFIT TEACHERS?

Extended conversations:

- Inform teachers of children's interests and what they understand.
- Help teachers plan curriculum. Teachers can build on children's current knowledge and skills to teach new concepts and develop new understandings.
- Provide informal assessment opportunities to determine children's current skills, future needs, and ongoing learning.

| WE WANT "THICK" CONVERSATIONS! | |
|--|---|
| THIN: | THICK: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children use and hear limited language Questions require no response or one word answer Stops communication and the thinking process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include multiple two-way exchanges Extend children's communications Respond to children's interests and experiences Nurture children's thinking skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model the thinking process Promote connections and understandings Introduce new concepts and skills |

EMPHASIZE *

Thick conversations include multiple back-and-forth exchanges.

SLIDE 10: WE WANT "THICK" CONVERSATIONS!

We want to engage all children in conversations that promote **language development, thinking skills, and social development.** We also want to encourage them to **express their own needs and ideas.** There are two types of conversations: "thick" and "thin."

Thin conversations:

- Limit opportunities for children to hear language and communicate.
- Use rhetorical questions (that require no response) and cut off the conversation.
 - » Example: "You like playing with that toy, don't you?"
- Use closed-ended questions that require only one-word responses.
 - » Example: "Is your diaper wet?" A child may respond non-verbally, or say "yes" or "no."
- Transfer simple information between adult and child—typically, specific knowledge the child has already learned.
- Limit opportunities for the child to think creatively or problem solve.
- Stop the conversation after the child has responded.

Thick conversations:

Include multiple two-way exchanges between teacher and child:

- Provide frequent opportunities for the child to interact
- Support the child in taking turns
- Model conversational rules, for example, paying attention to the speaker, staying on the topic, responding to the conversation partner

Extend children's communication and provide opportunities for children to hear and learn a variety of language and communication skills:

- Keep the interaction going
 - » Make comments on what the child is interested in
Examples:
"You like bubbles" as an infant watches and smiles while you blow bubbles
"This rock has dots and stripes," as a preschooler shows a rock she found outdoors

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



- » Ask open ended questions

Examples:

“Where did it go?” as an infant drops a favorite toy

“What does the wind do?” outside with preschoolers on a windy day

- » Provide time for the child to respond

- Add new words to what the child says or does

- » Introduce new vocabulary

Examples:

“Bye-bye, Daddy!” as the child makes gestures with his hands.

“Snakes slither. They move by pushing against the ground.”

- » Make sentences more complete

Examples:

“The car goes, Vroom!” as an older infant points to a car.

“You went home through the park,” after a preschooler said, “I goed home that way.”

Respond to children’s interests and experiences:

- Watch and listen carefully to learn about what children know and are interested in
- Support and scaffold children’s learning and understanding
- Help children develop new knowledge

Nurture children’s thinking skills:

- Model the thinking process, for example, with “self-talk” by saying out loud what you’re thinking or how you are problem solving

- Promote connections and understandings

Examples:

“You squeezed the toy and made it squeak!”

“See, this is a picture of you when you were a baby.”

“What does that remind you of?”

- Introduce new concepts and skills

Examples:

“You’re kicking your feet because you want the blanket off?”

“Let’s pretend this block is a car.”

“The last number you said tells us how many shells you have in your bucket.”



For additional information and ideas about nurturing infants' and toddlers' thinking skills, review the following EHS NRC *News You Can Use* resources on the ECLKC website:

- Foundations of School Readiness: Cognition and General Knowledge
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/docs/nycu-cognition.pdf>
- Foundations of School Readiness: Approaches Toward Learning, Part 2 of 3 (attention, curiosity, information gathering)
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/docs/nycu-school-readiness-part-02.pdf>
- Foundations of School Readiness: Approaches Toward Learning, Part 3 of 3 (memory, persistence, problem solving)
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/docs/nycu-school-readiness-part-03.pdf>



| TODDLERS | |
|---|---|
|  | <p>THICK Conversation Example</p> <p>Teacher: You did some interesting things with the rubber ducks. Tell me about what you did with the small ducks.</p> <p>Child: I line the ducks.</p> <p>Teacher: Ah, you put the small ducks in a line. You used so many that the line stretched across the water table. I wonder how many small ducks you have. How can we find out?</p> <p>Child: I count - 1-2- (Teacher joins in) -3-4-5-6-7.</p> <p>Teacher: Wow, you lined up seven small ducks! What are you doing with the larger ducks?</p> <p>Child: I line more ducks.</p> <p>Teacher: (Pointing) This line looks different from the line with the small ducks. How are you lining these ducks up?</p> <p>Child: I make bigger.</p> <p>Teacher: I see. You're lining these ducks up by size—small, medium, and large, just like in the book we read this morning. Now you have two lines of ducks. What will you do next?</p> <p>Child: I make swim. (Splashes the water, making the ducks move) I did it! Ducks swim in the pool!</p> <p>Teacher: Yes, and they look like they're having fun swimming in the pool. But, oh no, the ducks aren't in lines anymore! What will you do?</p> <p>Child: I fix ducks. (Child starts to put small ducks in a line.)</p> |
|  | <p>THIN Conversation Example</p> <p>Teacher: Look how nicely you lined up the ducks!</p> <p>Child: (Smiles)</p> <p>Teacher: Was it hard to do?</p> <p>(Child shakes his head "no")</p> |

SLIDE 11: CONVERSATION EXAMPLES—TODDLER

Here is a comparison of thin and thick conversations between a toddler and an adult.

Introduce the examples.

These two conversations took place in the outdoor play space. An older toddler was hard at work at the water table playing with rubber ducks. First he lined up all of the small ducks, head to tail. Then, he lined up the larger ducks by size (seriation). Observing the child's math skills in action, the teacher comments on what she sees.

DISCUSSION

Ask participants to identify differences in these two conversations. Below are possible responses.

In a **thin** conversation, the child:

- Hears 13 words.
- Speaks 0 words.
- Gestures 2 times.
- Has 2 opportunities to communicate.

In a **thick** conversation, the child:

- Hears 149 words.
- Speaks 34 words.
- Gestures 1 time.
- Has 6 opportunities to communicate.
- Is encouraged to share information and fully engage in the conversation.
- Brings new information and ideas to the conversation.



PRESCHOOLERS

THICK Conversation Example

Teacher: What was your favorite part of creating this piece of art?
Child: I liked making the plane.
 Teacher: Oh, you made an airplane. Tell me how you made this airplane.
Child: I drew on the paper and folded it up.
 Teacher: I see. You drew your design on the paper with markers and then folded the paper into an airplane. What is your next plan going to be?
Child: I am going to fly it in the sky.
 Teacher: Very interesting, how do you know that your plane will fly?
Child: Because I made these wings.
 Teacher: Oh I see, so you think that the wings help the airplane fly. I think that is an excellent hypothesis. How will you test your idea that the wings will make your plane fly?
Child: I will throw it. (Throws plane and laughs) I did it!
 Teacher: Yes, your airplane soared across the table! How do you think you could make your airplane fly higher?
Child: I will make it another wing. (Child heads back to the drawing and writing center.)

THIN Conversation Example

Teacher: What did you make?
Child: A plane.
 Teacher: Does it fly?
Child: Yes.

SLIDE 12: CONVERSATION EXAMPLES— PRESCHOOLER

Here is a comparison of a thin conversation and thick conversation between a preschool child and an adult.

Introduce the examples.

These two conversations took place in a Head Start classroom during an extended work time, where a child spent 20 minutes in the drawing and writing center. During this time the child drew a design on a piece of paper with five different colored markers, then carefully folded the paper several times. After making the final fold, the child got up from the table smiling and approached the classroom’s lead teacher.

DISCUSSION

Ask participants to identify differences in these two conversations. Below are possible responses.

In a **thin** conversation, the child:

- Hears 7 words.
- Speaks 3 words.
- Has 2 opportunities to practice language skills.

In a **thick** conversation, the child:

- Hears 113 words.
- Speaks 41 words.
- Has 6 opportunities to practice language.
- Is encouraged to share information and fully engage in the conversation.
- Brings new information and ideas to the conversation.





Length of video: Approximately 1 minute and 7 seconds

SLIDE 13: VIDEO: THICK AND THIN—TODDLERS

These two video clips show a teacher conversing with toddlers.

NOTE

Choose either Option A or B, based on the time allotted and the needs of your audience.

Option A

Introduce the video.

This video provides an example of a teacher engaged in a thin and then a thick conversation with young children. Have participants pay particular attention to interactions between the teacher and the boy in the green shirt. Note the differences in the amount of language exchanged, as well as the child's interest and engagement in the conversation.

VIDEO

DISCUSSION

Pause the video after each example. Ask participants how each video example illustrates either a thick or thin conversation.

Option B

Complete the *Video Review: Thick and Thin—Toddlers* learning activity (outlined on the next page).





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

VIDEO REVIEW: THICK AND THIN— TODDLERS

Introduce the activity.

In this activity, participants observe a teacher engaging in conversation with a small group of toddlers.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Video Review: Thick and Thin—Toddlers* learning activity and review the directions.

Ask participants to analyze the conversations between the teacher and the children. Pay particular attention to the teacher's interaction with the boy in the green shirt. First, we view her in a thin conversation and then we will see her engaging the same child in a thick conversation. As participants watch each clip, they can write down examples of what the teacher says. Based on their observations, ask them to make notes on the feedback they would give to this teacher.

VIDEO

DISCUSSION

Pause the video after each example. Ask participants to work in pairs, and share their observations and the feedback they would provide to the teacher.

Repeat for the thick conversation example.

Bring the large group back together. Ask for volunteers to share insights from the small group conversations with the large group.



VIDEO REVIEW: THICK AND THIN

TODDLERS

- Shows interest in the child's ideas
- Extends thinking by asking questions
- Connects the conversation to the child's parents
- Scaffolds language development



SLIDE 14: VIDEO REVIEW: THICK AND THIN— TODDLERS

Use this slide to summarize the video discussion of the conversation examples.

Highlight the following:

- Child engagement:
 - » Engagement level in thin versus thick examples
 - » Cues the child provides to show he is engaged and interested in the conversation
- How the teacher extends the conversation:
 - » Shows interest in the child's ideas
 - » Asks questions to extend the child's thinking
 - » Connects the conversation to the child's parents
- Opportunities the teacher uses to scaffold the child's language:
 - » Repeats and clarifies what the child says
 - » Expands on the child's words and phrases
 - » Adds new vocabulary





Length of video: Approximately 2 minutes and 50 seconds

SLIDE 15: VIDEO: SNOW DAY—PRESCHOOLER

This video shows a teacher conversing with a preschool child.

NOTE

Choose either Option A or B, based on the time allotted and the needs of your audience.

Option A

Introduce the video.

This video provides an example of a teacher engaged in a thin and then a thick conversation with the same child.

Ask participants to observe the differences in the amount of language exchanged, as well as the child's interest and engagement in the conversation.

VIDEO

DISCUSSION

Pause the video after each example. Ask participants how each video example illustrates either a thick or thin conversation.

Option B

Complete the *Video Review: Snow Day* learning activity (outlined on the next page).





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

VIDEO REVIEW: SNOW DAY— PRESCHOOLERS

Introduce the activity.

In this activity, participants observe a teacher engaging in conversation with a child. First, we view her in a thin conversation, and then we will see her engaging the same child in a thick conversation.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Video Review: Snow Day—Preschoolers* learning activity and review the directions.

Ask participants to analyze the teacher-child conversations in this video and write down examples of what the teacher says. Based on their observations, ask them to make notes on the feedback they would give to this teacher.

VIDEO

Pause the video between each clip.

DISCUSSION

- Divide participants into small groups. Ask them to share their observations and the feedback they would provide the teacher.
- Repeat for the thick conversation example.
- Bring the large group back together. Ask for volunteers to share insights from the small group conversations with the large group.



VIDEO REVIEW: SNOW DAY

PRESCHOOLERS

- Shows interest in what the child is doing
- Expands on the child's ideas
- Extends thinking by asking questions
- Connects to prior experiences
- Scaffolds language development



SLIDE 16: VIDEO REVIEW: SNOW DAY

Use this slide to summarize the discussion of the conversation examples.

Highlight the following:

- Child engagement:
 - » Engagement level in thin versus thick examples
 - » Cues the child provides to show she is engaged and interested in the conversation
- How the teacher extends the conversation:
 - » Shows excitement and interest in the child's snow day drawing
 - » Expands on the child's ideas and comments
 - » Asks questions to extend the child's thinking
 - » Connects the conversation to the child's prior experiences (What will they do when they are snowed in? How will they clean the snow off the car?)
- Opportunities the teacher uses to scaffold the child's language:
 - » Expands on the child's words or phrases
 - » Provides clarifying language
 - » Adds new vocabulary

ENGAGING CHILDREN
IN CONVERSATIONS



- Actively listen to and observe what a child communicates.
- Match the tone and feelings of the conversation to a child's emotions.
- Build on a child's experiences and interests.
- Promote many back-and-forth exchanges between partners in the conversation.

SLIDE 17: ENGAGING CHILDREN IN CONVERSATIONS

Basic conversation elements must be in place before thick, extended conversations can occur:

- Active listening and observation
- Matching the tone and feelings of the conversation to the child's affect
- Building on children's experiences and interests
- Promoting multiple back-and-forth exchanges

It's important with all children, but especially with infants and toddlers, to wait for them to respond during back-and-forth exchanges, and to watch for cues that they are ready to stop or disengage from the interaction.

NOTE


These conversation elements are outlined in more depth in the suite entitled *Engaging Children in Conversations*.



EXTENDING THE CONVERSATION

INFANTS AND TODDLERS

- Encourage multiple back-and-forth exchanges.
- Extend children's communications.
- Respond to children's interests and ideas.
- Nurture children's thinking skills.



SLIDE 18: EXTENDING THE CONVERSATION WITH INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Review strategies to extend conversations with infants and toddlers.

Encourage multiple back-and-forth exchanges:

- Comment on and talk about topics children are interested in and can relate to.
- Take turns communicating.
- Provide time for children to respond.

Extend children's communications:

- Describe what you think children are communicating, especially if they are not using words yet.
- Use rich language (interesting language and vocabulary).
- Model proper language use. Avoid explicitly correcting a child's grammar and pronunciation. Consider rewording or rephrasing what the child said. For example, if a child reaches toward a pile of blocks and says, "bwok," you might say, "Yes, this is a big pile of blocks. What would you like to build with the blocks?"

Respond to children's interests and actions:

- Comment on what children are doing.
- Ask open-ended questions in response to children's actions and communications.
- Encourage children to think about what they are doing.

Nurture children's thinking skills:

- Share out loud what you know and/or understand (self-talk).
- Relate what the children are doing to their previous experiences.
- Introduce new concepts and skills.

OPTIONAL DISCUSSION

Different cultures have different communication and language practices, for example, the emphasis on nonverbal versus verbal communication. As appropriate, invite participants to share examples of how they might apply these strategies with children in their own classroom.





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

CONVERSATION PRACTICE VIGNETTES—INFANTS AND TODDLERS

In this role-play learning activity, participants practice thick, extended conversations with infants and toddlers.

Divide the large group into smaller groups.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Conversation Practice Vignettes—Infants and Toddlers* learning activity and review the directions.

Within each group, have participants decide who is going to role-play the teacher. The group will also decide who will role-play the infants or toddlers, as designated by the vignette. If there are group members without assigned roles, they will act as observers and reporters.

NOTE

Have group members take turns with the roles of teacher and children (if role-playing multiple vignettes).

Introduce the activity:

- Four vignettes are provided for role-playing and discussing extended conversation scenarios.
- Based on the amount of time available, presenters may choose how many vignettes each small group is responsible for.

Possible options:

- Each group is assigned one vignette to role-play and discuss.
- Each group is assigned two vignettes (either #1 or #2 and either #3 or #4) to role-play and discuss.
- Each group role-plays and discusses each of the four vignettes.

DISCUSSION

Ask the designated observers from each group to share their impressions of the vignettes. If all group members were involved in role-playing a vignette, invite volunteers to share their observations. Take time to hear an example from each of the four vignettes.



EXTENDING THE CONVERSATION

PRESCHOOLERS

- Encourage multiple back-and-forth exchanges.
- Encourage higher level thinking.
- Provide opportunities to extend children's language.
- Respond to children's interests and ideas.



SLIDE 19: EXTENDING THE CONVERSATION WITH PRESCHOOLERS

Review the strategies adults can use to extend conversations with preschoolers.

Encourage back-and-forth exchanges:

- Discuss topics children are interested in and can relate to.
- Take turns speaking.
- Provide time for children to respond.

Encourage higher level thinking:

- Share what you know and/or understand.
- Explain your thinking process.
- Introduce new concepts or skills.

Talk with children about activities they are engaged in:

- Comment on what children are doing.
- Ask questions about what children say or do and what they can do next.
- Encourage children to make comparisons, consider other possibilities, and/or think beyond the here and now.

Extend children's language:

- Expand words by adding a little more.
- Add new vocabulary.
- Model proper language use.

OPTIONAL DISCUSSION

Different cultures have different communication and language practices, for example, the emphasis on nonverbal versus verbal communication. As appropriate, invite participants to share examples of how they might apply these strategies with children in their own classroom.





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

CONVERSATION PRACTICE VIGNETTES—PRESCHOOLERS

In this role-play learning activity, participants practice thick, extended conversations with preschoolers.

Divide the large group into smaller groups.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Conversation Practice Vignettes—Preschoolers* learning activity and review the directions.

Within each group, have participants decide who is going to role-play the teacher and the remaining group members will role-play the preschool children.

NOTE

Have group members take turns with the roles of teacher (if role-playing multiple vignettes).

Introduce the activity:

- Four vignettes are provided for role-playing and discussing extended conversation scenarios.
- Based on the amount of time available, presenters may choose how many vignettes each small group is responsible for.

Possible options:

- Each group is assigned one vignette to role-play and discuss.
- Each group is assigned two vignettes (either #1 or #2 and either #3 or #4) to role-play and discuss.
- Each group role-plays and discusses each of the four vignettes.

DISCUSSION

Ask volunteers to share their observations and responses from their small groups. Take time to hear an example from each of the four vignettes.



LEARNING ACTIVITY:

DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN

In this activity, participants plan how they intend to integrate this content into their individual classrooms or centers.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Developing an Action Plan* learning activity and review the directions.

Introduce the activity:

- This handout is designed to help participants plan opportunities to have meaningful, extended conversations with children.
- Use the first column to select a time of day and location.
- Use the second column to outline the topic of conversation and how this topic fits a child's interests.

Participants can work alone or in small groups. If time allows, bring the large group back together and have several volunteers share their plans.

SUMMARY

Extended conversations are rich, "thick," multiple back-and-forth exchanges that help children develop more complex language, thinking skills, and social skills.

SLIDE 20: SUMMARY

Extended conversations are rich, thick, multiple back-and-forth exchanges that help children develop more complex language, thinking skills, and social skills.

HANDOUT

Based on participant roles, distribute and review handouts.

- *Tips for Teachers* (young infant, toddler, and preschool versions): These tip sheets include simple, straightforward suggestions and reminders for how to set the stage, start, and extend conversations.
- *Tools for Supervisors*: This is a guide to help supervisors focus and give feedback on conversations in classrooms. It provides several essential elements to capture extended conversations. Note: this tool corresponds with the five NCQTL conversation suites.
- *Tools for Teachers*: This tool supports teaching and learning by providing teachers with a visual reminder.
- *Helpful Resources* (infant/toddler version and preschool version): These two handouts list additional resources for engaging children in conversations.





SLIDE 21: CLOSING

Provide participants with NCQTL and EHS NRC contact information, and encourage them to visit the websites for additional resources.



OPTIONAL SLIDE: SAY HELLO

Note: This slide outlines the series of five in-service suites on Language Modeling and Conversations. The recommended placement for this overview slide is after Slide 3.

Thick and Thin Conversations is one in a series of five in-service suites focused on engaging children in conversations. These five suites can easily be remembered by the phrase “Say **HELLO**.” This progression begins with teachers **H**aving conversations with children and then **E**xtending these conversations into thick verbal exchanges. Three strategies then outline how to create thick verbal exchanges: **L**isten and ask questions, **L**isten and expand, and **O**ffer new words. This in-service suite is focused on basic strategies for promoting conversations with children.

The five HELLO in-service suites include:

Have conversations.

- In-service suite: *Language Modeling and Conversations: Engaging Children in Conversations*

Extend into thick.

- In-service suite: *Language Modeling and Conversations: Thick and Thin Conversations*

Listen and ask questions.

- In-service suite: *Language Modeling and Conversations: Asking Questions*

Listen and expand.

- In-service suite: *Language Modeling and Conversations: Expansions*

Offer new words.

- In-service suite: *Language Modeling and Conversations: Novel Words*



For more information, contact us at: NCQTL@UW.EDU or 877-731-0764

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