

Birth to Five

This guide offers suggestions for presenting ***Language Modeling and Conversations: Engaging Children in 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 (20 slides)
- Optional slide: *Say HELLO*
- Projector and audio equipment
- Learning Activities:
 - » *Beginning the Conversation—Infants and Toddlers*
 - » *Beginning the Conversation—Preschoolers*
 - » *Conversations Around the Environment—Infants and Toddlers*
 - » *Conversations Around the Classroom—Preschoolers*
 - » *Video Review—Infants and Toddlers (with slides)*
 - » *Video Review—Preschoolers (with slides)*
- 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.
- This presentation includes interactive language strategies from *Language is the Key*. Presenters who have a copy of this video-based program may consider including it as part of the presentation.
- 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>





EMPHASIZE *

Conversations foster children's cognitive and social development, and help develop their language skills.

SLIDE 1: ENGAGING CHILDREN IN 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 their most recent meaningful conversation.

Introduce the topic.

Engaging Children in Conversations, Birth to Five, focuses on strategies teachers can use to engage infants, toddlers, and preschool children in meaningful conversations.



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.



OBJECTIVES



- To learn key elements and benefits of meaningful conversations with infants, toddlers, and preschool children
- To understand basic strategies
- To identify opportunities for conversations

SLIDE 3: OBJECTIVES

- To learn the key elements and benefits of meaningful communication and conversations with infants, toddlers, and preschool children.
- To understand strategies teachers can use to engage young children in conversations.
- To identify opportunities to have conversations with children during daily activities and routines.

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.

**BENEFITS FOR INFANTS, TODDLERS,
AND PRESCHOOLERS**



- Helps children communicate their intentions, feelings, and emotions
- Encourages children's learning of new concepts and skills
- Introduces children to new vocabulary, and helps them communicate more clearly and accurately

SLIDE 4: BENEFITS FOR INFANTS, TODDLERS, AND PRESCHOOLERS

Language is a form of communication—two or more people sharing thoughts, feelings, or ideas. When adults engage children in conversation it supports their development in these ways:

- **Social and emotional development:** Helps children communicate their intentions, feelings, and emotions
- **Cognitive development:** Encourages children's learning of new concepts and skills
- **Language development:** Introduces children to new vocabulary, and helps them communicate more clearly and accurately

For infants, when adults respond consistently to their gestures, body movements, and vocalizations in back-and-forth “conversations,” they learn that their needs are important to other people, and that it matters how well they can express those needs.

As infants and toddlers develop and grow, they begin to use gestures, sounds, and words more deliberately to express their feelings and ideas.

During the preschool years, children are rapidly learning new words and learning how to communicate more effectively.



...AND BENEFITS FOR TEACHERS

- Conversations build positive relationships between children and teachers.
- Conversations support curriculum and assessment, and help teachers:
 - Assess what children already know.
 - Determine what children are ready to learn next.
 - Monitor children's progress as they learn new skills.

SLIDE 5:

...AND BENEFITS FOR TEACHERS

Meaningful conversations create positive interactions. Positive interactions build strong relationships between adults and children.

Conversations assist teachers with:

- Curriculum development
- Lesson planning
- Conducting ongoing assessment

Conversations provide a tool for teachers to:

- Assess what the children already know
- Determine what children are ready to learn next
- Monitor children's progress as they learn new skills





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

BEGINNING THE CONVERSATION

In this activity, participants think broadly about their own conversations and experiences talking with children or adults.

Divide the large group into smaller groups.

HANDOUT

Distribute either the *Beginning the Conversation—Infants and Toddlers*, or *Beginning the Conversation—Preschoolers* learning activity to each participant according to the ages of the children they work with.

Review the directions and give participants time to discuss the questions.

DISCUSSION

Share ideas from small group conversations with the large group:

- Record ideas onto a sheet that is visible to participants.
- Tally repeated ideas to indicate multiple similar responses.
- Leave these ideas up throughout the training.
- Refer back to similarities as you move through the training material.

Points to highlight:

There may be similarities between what adults like to talk about, what preschoolers and verbal toddlers like to talk about, and what pre-verbal infants like to *hear* about. Infants like to hear about things that are interesting and familiar, but they also like to hear about the things that adults are interested in!

NOTE

Remind participants of cultural variations related to language and communication.

- Engaging young children in conversations is beneficial on so many levels, but the notion of talking directly with young children, particularly infants and toddlers, in the manner in which this in-service suite suggests, might not be considered appropriate in some families or cultures.
- This could impact how staff members talk with children, especially if they grew up in families where adults did not converse with young children. It's important for teaching staff to be aware of their own feelings as well as the feelings of children's families.



KEY CONVERSATION ELEMENTS

In meaningful conversations with infants, toddlers, and preschool children, teachers:

- Move to the child's level.
- Watch and listen actively.
- Match the child's mood and feelings.
- Wait for a response and encourage back-and-forth exchanges.

SLIDE 6: KEY CONVERSATION ELEMENTS

Ask participants to share examples of how they would define a conversation. Then share this definition:

Conversations are back-and-forth exchanges between at least two people where one person initiates the communication, while the other person engages in active listening and then responds appropriately.

Highlight the following points:

- Back-and-forth exchanges
- Between at least two people
- One person initiates the conversation
- The other person engages in active listening and then responds appropriately.

Based on this definition, here are **key elements** for engaging children in conversations.

- Move to the child's level: Hold an infant in your arms or a toddler on your lap. Sit in a chair or on the ground, or crouch down to the child's height.
 - » Provides an opportunity to connect during the conversation
 - » Communicates nonverbally that you are listening and respect the child's ideas
- Active listening:
 - » Provides opportunities for children to engage in the conversation.
 - » Provides time for children to express complete thoughts.
 - » Limits adult interruption.
 - » Allows adults time to listen, observe, and draw the child's attention. With an infant or toddler, for example, an adult might look at the child, talk quietly, and show an object the child is interested in.

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- Match the tone of the conversation to the child's affect:
 - » Shows that you are aware of the tone and feelings expressed by the child.
 - » Allows you to respond with sensitivity to the child's tone and affect.
 - » Communicates that you are listening and understand the child's words and feelings.
- Reciprocal exchanges:
 - » Consist of multiple back-and-forth exchanges between participants on a topic.
 - » Provide time for children to respond before adults take another turn.

DISCUSSION

Encourage participants to comment on these key elements. How might these elements vary across diverse cultural and linguistic contexts?

NOTE

Children learn language best when given multiple opportunities to express their ideas and feelings.

This is important for adults to remember, as they often tend to dominate conversations with children.





SLIDE 7: PROMOTING CONVERSATIONS

Start the conversation.

C.A.R. stands for these simple strategies adults can use to talk with children about their interests:

- **Comment and wait**—Make a comment on what a child is doing and wait for the child to respond.
- **Ask a question and wait**—Ask a question that relates to what a child is doing and wait, providing time for the child to think and respond.
- **Respond by adding a little more**—Follow up the child's response by providing a little more complexity to the child's language, allowing the child to hear a language model just above their current level.

The key conversation elements and C.A.R. strategies described in this in-service suite can be generally applied to children from birth to five.

C.A.R. with infants and toddlers

- Infants' communication consists of verbal and nonverbal cues such as coos, babbling, facial expressions, gestures, and body movements. Adults can respond to an infant's cues by imitating her vocalizations and facial expressions (this is called "mirroring") or adding language to her gestures, ("Up? You want me to pick you up?") when she reaches up her arms.
- After following an infant's lead for a while, change your response slightly. For example, if he says, "Aah," and you say, "Aah," the next time he says "Aah," you say, "Aah, ooh," and watch what happens! This small change creates novelty for an infant and will help him stay engaged for longer periods of time.
- Watch for cues that an infant is tired of communicating, such as turning her head away, arching her back, or simply blinking her eyes.
- Toddlers use simple words or word approximations. They begin to put two or three words together to form incomplete choppy phrases (telegraphic speech). Adults can respond to a toddler's phrase by rewording it into a more complete sentence. For example, if a child holds a block out and says, "Bok, more," the adult might respond by saying, "Oh, you want more blocks."
- Conversations with infants and toddlers can also be entirely non-verbal or include non-verbal responses such as facial expressions, gestures, and body movements.
- When pausing to give a child enough time to respond, the amount of time needed may be different for each child, depending on their temperament, culture, and experience.



NOTE 

Ask participants if they are familiar with *Follow the C.A.R.*, from *Language is the Key*. Many of the Early Head Start/ Head Start grantees may have a copy of this video series.



EMPHASIZE 

Daily routines and free play are good times for conversations!

SLIDE 8: CONVERSATION TIME WITH INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Routines and play experiences can easily provide opportunities for conversations with infants and toddlers.

- **Arrival and departure**—Conversations that connect home and school
- **Diapering and toileting/dressing and undressing**—One-on-one conversations about the routine itself (what the adult is doing, what the child is doing, or how the child is responding), naming body parts and clothing, talking about what happens next in the daily schedule
- **Mealtimes**—Conversations about food and food preferences, what happened earlier in the day, what will happen later, families, and children’s interests
- **Play experiences**—Conversations about what the children are doing; connecting play experiences with home experiences; for more verbal children, talking about what they want to play with and what they intend to do with materials and equipment
- **Transitions**—Conversations about what children just did and what happens next



CONVERSATION TIME

PRESCHOOLERS

Opportunities during routines and play:

- Arrival and departure
- Times of extended play
- Meal and snack times
- Small group activities
- Transitions



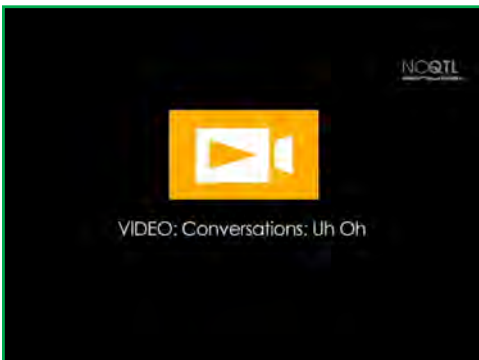
SLIDE 9: CONVERSATION TIME WITH PRESCHOOLERS

Daily activities and routine times easily provide opportunities for conversations with preschoolers.

- **Arrival and departure**—Conversations that connect home and school
- **Extended play or free choice**—Conversations about what the children are doing
- **Meal and snack times**—A natural time for conversations about school, family, food, interests, plans, etc.
- **Small group activities**—Conversations that connect activities and stories to children’s interests and experiences
- **Transition times between activities**—Conversations that assist children in making connections and problem-solving

NOTE

Preferred times for conversations may vary across cultures. Be sure to invite participant input as appropriate.



VIDEO: Conversations: Uh Oh

Length of video: Approximately 28 seconds

SLIDE 10: VIDEO: CONVERSATIONS: UH OH

Introduce the video.

This video shows a conversation between an older infant and a teacher during mealtime. Show it again if needed.

VIDEO

VIDEO REVIEW
CONVERSATIONS: UH OH

INFANTS AND TODDLERS

- Listening to the child
- Matching tone and emotion
- Expressing and expanding on what the child is trying to say
- Following the child’s lead
- Giving time to respond
- Encouraging several back-and-forth exchanges



SLIDE 11: VIDEO REVIEW: CONVERSATIONS: UH OH

Discuss key elements from the video example.

- Ask participants what key elements they heard the teacher use in her conversation with the infant.
- Then reveal the text on the slide that lists the key elements in the video.





Length of video: Approximately 1 minute and 47 seconds

SLIDE 12: VIDEO: CONVERSATIONS WITH CHILDREN MONTAGE

Introduce the video.

This video provides examples of teacher–child conversations across three different routine times:

- Meal time
- Free play
- Small group outdoor activity

VIDEO 

NOTE 

The video can be paused after each example for discussion.

VIDEO REVIEW: CONVERSATIONS WITH CHILDREN MONTAGE

- Active listening
- Physically on the child's level
- Matching tone and feelings
- C.A.R. (Comment, Ask, Respond)
- Multiple back-and-forth exchanges



SLIDE 13: VIDEO REVIEW: CONVERSATIONS WITH CHILDREN MONTAGE

DISCUSSION 

Discuss key conversation elements from the video example.

- Ask participants what key elements they heard the teacher use in her conversation with the child.
- Then reveal the slide text that lists the key elements in the video clip.





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

CONVERSATIONS AROUND THE ENVIRONMENT OR CLASSROOM

This activity is designed to help teachers think intentionally about how infant and toddler environments and preschool learning centers can initiate or encourage meaningful conversations. Daily routines and environments provide many opportunities for conversations, and teachers need to be ready to build on these opportunities.

Have participants divide into groups of two to three. If you are meeting with teachers in their programs, have them tour the indoor and outdoor environments.

If the training is not in a classroom, use photos. These photos can come from your own center, early childhood books such as *Designs for Living and Learning* (Curtis & Carter, 2003), or participants' environments and classrooms.

You can also use the photos that have been provided with this in-service suite. These photos are attached to the *Conversations Around the Environment—Infants and Toddlers* and *Conversations Around the Classroom—Preschoolers* handouts, and include examples of routines and experiences.

HANDOUT

Distribute either *Conversations Around the Environment—Infants and Toddlers*, or *Conversations Around the Classroom—Preschoolers* and review the directions.

Invite participants to think about the children in their groups. What have they observed the children saying and doing during indoor and outdoor routines and play experiences?

Routines might include arrival/departure, diapering/toileting, dressing/undressing, and meals. Experiences and activities might include books, stories, and writing; playing with toys and gross motor equipment; sensory exploration and science (e.g., water and sand); creative arts such as music, movement, and art; and imitating, pretending, and dramatic play.

Ask participants to brainstorm conversational topics and then role play conversations about materials, routines, experiences, and activities. Encourage participants to take note of interesting topics to share later with the larger group.

DISCUSSION

Ask participants to share examples from their small group discussion with the larger group.



REMEMBER!

Meaningful conversations happen in language-rich environments.

- Encourage adults to model quality conversations.
- Involve all adults in planning for quality conversations with children.
- Integrate conversations throughout the entire day!

EMPHASIZE *

High quality verbal interactions with adults throughout the day encourage children’s cognitive and language development.

**SLIDE 14:
REMEMBER!**

Children are biologically primed to learn language. Nurturing, responsive adults support language development from the first days of each baby’s life by talking to them, answering their babbles, and imitating their coos and noises. As infants grow, adults should provide a rich language environment that is increasingly complex.

Language-rich classrooms are critical for developing children’s language abilities:

- All adults need to consistently model for children how to communicate and engage in conversations.
- All classroom teachers need to intentionally plan for quality conversations with children throughout the entire day.

NOTE 

For dual language learners: Teachers, parents, and family members should use the language they are most comfortable with when speaking with a child, because they will use a more complex vocabulary.

Teachers should use the language they are most comfortable speaking **even if a child does not speak that language**. When teachers do not speak a child’s home language, they need to effectively model English to support the child’s English language skills, and also work with the family to support the child’s home language skills. Children who have a strong foundation in their home language are building the skills and knowledge they will also use to learn English. Teachers can learn songs, key words, and phrases in a child’s home language to help connect home and program experiences.

See resources on the National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness website: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic>

More ideas about supporting dual language infants, toddlers, and their families:

- Early Head Start Tip Sheet 42
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/Early%20Head%20Start/family-engagement/language-culture/EHS-Tip-Sheet42.pdf>
- Early Head Start Tip Sheet 43
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/Early%20Head%20Start/family-engagement/language-culture/EHS-Tip-Sheet-43.pdf>



**NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!
SET THE STAGE**

WITH INFANTS AND TODDLERS

- Make sure child is ready to interact.
- Draw the child's attention.
- Move to the child's level.
- Watch and listen to what the child says.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ABC

SLIDE 15: NOW IT'S YOUR TURN! SET THE STAGE WITH INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Review strategies to engage infants and toddlers in conversations.

Set the stage:

- Make sure the child is calm, comfortable, and ready to interact.
- Draw the child's attention. This is particularly relevant for young infants.
- Move to the child's level. This can include holding an infant in one's arms or toddler in one's lap, or lying or sitting on the floor next to a child.
- Listen to what the child says. This includes an infant's coos, cries, grunts, squeals, and babbles.

**NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!
SET THE STAGE**

WITH PRESCHOOLERS

- Move to the child's level.
- Listen to what the child says.
- Match the tone of the conversation to the child's affect.
- Take turns talking.



SLIDE 16: NOW IT'S YOUR TURN! SET THE STAGE WITH PRESCHOOLERS

Review strategies to engage preschoolers in conversations:

Set the stage:

- Move to the child's level.
- Listen actively to what the child says.
- Match the tone of the conversation to the child's affect.
- Provide opportunities for turn-taking and reciprocal exchanges.



START THE CONVERSATION

WITH INFANTS AND TODDLERS

- C.A.R. is also for infants and toddlers!
- Comment or ask a question.
- Pause, give the child time to respond.
- Follow the child's lead.
- Watch for cues that child is tiring.



SLIDE 17: START THE CONVERSATION WITH INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Promote conversations that build on children's experiences and interests.

Start the conversation.

C.A.R. for infants and toddlers:

- **Comment** on what the infant or toddler shows interest in or is doing, and then wait.
- **Ask a question** and then wait. Infants and toddlers can respond with a vocalization, facial expression, gesture, or body movement.
- **Respond** by copying sounds, gestures, and words. Add words to what you think the infant or toddler is saying.
- Pause and give time for the child to respond.
- Follow the child's lead in communicating back and forth.
- Watch for cues that the child is tiring.

START THE CONVERSATION

WITH PRESCHOOLERS

- Comment on what the child is doing or what the child is interested in.
- Ask a question that relates to the child's experiences or interests. Give the child enough time to respond.
- Respond by adding a little more to what the child says.



SLIDE 18: START THE CONVERSATION WITH PRESCHOOLERS

Review strategies to engage preschoolers in conversations.

Promote conversations that build on children's interests and experiences.

Start the conversation.

- **Comment** on what children are doing.
- **Ask questions.**
- **Respond** by adding a little more to model new language.
- Always wait and provide the child with enough time to respond.





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

VIDEO REVIEW—INFANTS AND TODDLERS

In this activity, participants have further opportunities to observe teacher-child conversations with infants and toddlers. The video examples *Who's that Baby?* and *Brushing Teeth* are found on slides included with this in-service suite.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Video Review—Infants and Toddlers* handout to participants and review directions. Encourage participants to watch first, and then write.

VIDEO

Show video examples: *Who's that Baby?* and *Brushing Teeth*.

Provide a minute or two at the conclusion of each video for participants to write their observations.

DISCUSSION

Ask participants to share their observations:

- Share examples of each key conversation element.
- If participants did not see an example of a key element, have the group brainstorm how that element could be embedded into the conversation. (Remind participants that these are real teachers and children, engaged in real classroom experiences!)

Here are possible examples for discussion.

Example 1: Who's that Baby?

- Note how the teacher uses the mirror to engage Ashland's attention and provide a shared focus for the interaction.
- Note how the teacher watches and listens to Ashland. She responds to Ashland's cues by asking questions ("Who's that baby?") and commenting on what Ashland is seeing (image in the mirror, eyes, mouth) and doing (kissing the baby).
- Note the back-and-forth exchanges between the teacher and Ashland, and how the teacher waits for Ashland to finish vocalizing before responding.
- Note how the teacher uses a warm tone of voice, quietly animates her voice to show interest, and matches Ashland's emotions.



Example 2: Conversations: Brushing Teeth

- Note how the teacher repeats and expands on what the child says by asking questions and adding information. For example:
 - » Child: "Uh-oh!"
 - » Teacher: "Uh-oh, where did the paper towel go?" (Pauses) "It's inside." (Turns the handle, the paper towel comes out.)
 - » Child: "Ahhh!"
 - » Teacher: "Look! More came out."
 - » Child: "I want some out!"
 - » Teacher: "More came out. Let's put that one in the trash can and we'll brush your teeth." (Pauses) "Are you ready?"
- Note how the teacher responds to the child's interest in the picture on the wall (of a child brushing her teeth) and uses it to keep her focused on the routine and the tooth brushing conversation.
- Note how the teacher comments on what the child is doing (brushing her teeth) and hearing. ("Do you hear it? Brush, brush, brush.")
- Note how the teacher uses a warm tone of voice, animates her voice to show excitement and interest, and matches the child's emotions.





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

VIDEO REVIEW—PRESCHOOLERS

In this activity, participants observe conversations between teachers and preschool children in three videos. The video examples *Going to the Grocery Shop*, *Taking a Trip to the Park*, and *Conversation in the Garden* are found on slides included with this in-service suite.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Video Review—Preschoolers* learning activity and review the directions. Encourage participants to watch first and write after.

VIDEO

Show the video examples: *Going to the Grocery Shop*, *Taking a Trip to the Park*, and *Conversation in the Garden*.

Provide a minute or two at the conclusion of each video for participants to write their observations.

DISCUSSION

Ask participants to share their observations:

- Share examples of each key conversation element.
- If participants do not see an example of a key element, have the group brainstorm how that element could be embedded into the conversation. (Remind the participants that these are real teachers and children, engaged in real classroom experiences!)

Here are possible examples for discussion.

Example 1: Going to the Grocery Shop

- Note how the teacher provides the child with time to formulate a response. She also helps him realize that it's okay to take time to think before responding.
- Note how the teacher acknowledges the child who enters the screen and then returns right back to the conversation with the focal child.

Note that this child seems to be a beginning conversationalist. Ask participants for other ideas of strategies the teacher could have used with this child. For example, using pictures or objects, making more comments, etc.

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Example 2: Taking a Trip to the Park

- Note the teacher's tone, she is very expressive and shares excitement with the children.
- Note how the teacher uses non-verbal communication to help all children understand what she is saying.
- Note how the teacher scaffolds the child's language. She first asks a question and when the child has difficulty answering she provides the child with possible words to use. The child then responds. The teacher then continues engaging with the child in conversation.
- Note how the teacher engages multiple children into the conversation and follows up with them throughout the conversation.
- Note how the teacher switches between English and Spanish, supporting both languages in the conversation.

Example 3: Conversation in the Garden

- Note the difference in the interaction when the teacher is standing versus when she lowers herself to the children's level.
- Note how the teacher focused the child in on the other child's statement, promoting communication between the children.
- Note how the teacher follows up with the child about his experience outside of school, encouraging him to make connections between home and school.



SUMMARY

Infants, toddlers, and preschool children all need adults to:

- Engage them with verbal and nonverbal language.
- Listen actively and wait for them to respond.
- Model meaningful, increasingly complex language.

SLIDE 19: SUMMARY

Conversations aren't just for older children. Children from birth—infants, toddlers, and preschool children—all need nurturing, responsive adults to engage them with verbal and nonverbal language, listen actively, and support their language development with meaningful communication.

HANDOUT

Based on participant roles, distribute and review these handouts. Some handouts have more than one version, listed below.

- *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 20: 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.

Engaging Children in 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*