

Birth to Five

This guide offers suggestions for presenting ***Language Modeling and Conversations: Novel Words, 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 necessary.

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 (23 slides)
- Optional slide: *Say HELLO*
- Projector and audio equipment
- Learning Activities:
 - » *Filling In Children's Phrases* (Optional, with slides)
 - » *Conversations from Books for Infants and Toddlers*
 - » *Conversations from Books for Preschoolers*
(Required for both activities: children's books with novel and interesting words)
 - » *Brainstorming Novel Words Around the Indoor and Outdoor Environments—Infants and Toddlers*
 - » *Brainstorming Novel Words Around the Classroom—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 incorporate new and novel words in extended, back-and-forth conversations with children, including young infants and toddlers.
- This is one in a series of five in-service suites called *Language Modeling and Conversations*.
- Learning activities offer participants opportunities to practice and plan for conversations that use novel and interesting words 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.
- Optional slides and learning activities are described in detail at the end of this document.

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>

Additionally, trainers may want to review the following articles for information about vocabulary development within the larger context of infant/toddler language development:

Bardige, B., & Bardige, M. K. (September, 2008). Talk to me, baby! Supporting language development in the first 3 years. *Zero to Three*, 29(1), 4–10. Retrieved from http://main.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/29-1_Bardige.pdf?docID=6641

Lockart, S. (2012). Supporting communication, language, and literacy learning with infants and toddlers, *Extensions*, 26(3), 1–10. Retrieved from http://www.highscope.org/file/newsandinformation/extensions/extvol26no3_low.pdf

Wittmer, D. S., & Peterson, S. (2010). *Strategies to Encourage Language Learning, Strategies to Support Language Development and Learning*. Retrieved from <http://www.education.com/reference/article/strategies-language-learning/>



SLIDE 1: NOVEL WORDS, 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 roles, etc.).
- Ask participants to share an experience when they or someone they know (another colleague, a parent, a verbal toddler, or child) used a new, interesting, or funny word.

Introduce the topic.

Novel Words, Birth to Five, focuses on incorporating new vocabulary words into everyday conversations with infants, toddlers, and preschool children.

Points to highlight:

- Engaging children in extended conversations fosters language, cognitive development, and social skills.
- The quality of what is said in the conversation greatly impacts these benefits.
- With very young children, infant-directed speech (IDS, also known as child-directed speech, parentese, or motherese) is conducive to language learning. For example, elongated vowel sounds and exaggerated pauses between words help infants begin to identify where one word ends and another word begins.
- Adults can support rich language acquisition by infants and toddlers in a variety of ways: by looking at and labeling what children focus on, using unusual and interesting words, repeating words, pairing familiar words with unfamiliar ones, and explaining the meaning and uses of words.

How research supports these statements:

- According to Roseberry Lytle (2014)
 - » The quality of language that infants and toddlers hear matters.
 - » Infants learn words best when adults use infant-directed speech, and when they repeat a single word or include a familiar word with other words.
 - » In the first year of life, early predictors of children's language and vocabulary development include following a speaker's eye gaze, using pointing gestures, and becoming attuned to the sounds of native speech.
 - » Children's word learning is best in social interactions in which live, familiar adults provide scaffolding, use eye gaze, and follow the child's lead.



- In follow up from the *Meaningful Differences* (Hart & Risley, 1995) research study, researchers found that both the number of words and the quality of the language children heard before their third birthday impacted their 3rd grade language and IQ test results. Quality was measured both as vocabulary (different kinds of words—nouns, adjectives, verbs) and the complexity of sentences (sentences with two or more clauses, past tense verbs, or questions).
- The National Early Literacy Panel (2008) found that children’s oral language (as measured by their grammar, ability to define words, listening comprehension, and vocabulary knowledge) plays an important role in their later literacy achievement.
- Oral language skills are critically important to reading and comprehension in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten.
- Additionally, research supports the important and active role teachers play in oral language development (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008).

It is critical for Early Head Start and Head Start programs to focus on oral language skills. One way to promote children’s language development is to engage them in extended conversations that use novel words.

NOTE

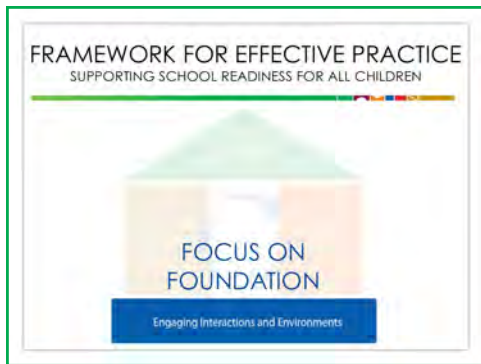
References for cited materials:

Hart, B., & Risley, T. R. (1995). *Meaningful differences in the everyday experience of young American children*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

National Early Literacy Panel. (2008). *Developing early literacy: A scientific synthesis of early literacy development and implications for intervention*. Jessup, MD: National Center for Family Literacy. Retrieved from <http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/NELPReport09.pdf>

Roseberry Lytle, S. (2014). *From sounds to sentences: How everyday interactions support language development*. Retrieved from <http://www.wla.org/assets/2014Conference/Handouts/from%20sounds%20to%20sentences.pdf>





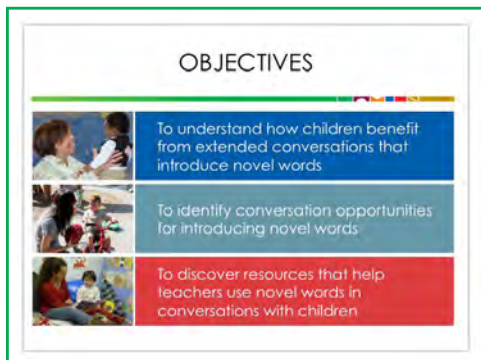
SLIDE 2: NCQTL'S FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE EVERYDAY PRACTICE

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. Using novel words in extended conversations supports engaging interactions between children and teachers in the classroom.



SLIDE 3: OBJECTIVES

- To understand how children benefit from extended conversations that introduce novel words
- To identify conversation opportunities for introducing novel words
- To discover resources that help teachers use novel words in conversations with children

Points to highlight:

- Young children develop language, including receptive and expressive vocabulary, in the context of human relationships.
- Infant-directed speech (IDS) plays an important role in helping very young children develop language skills and in their beginning awareness of words.

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?



- Rich, back-and-forth exchanges that help children develop more complex language, thinking, and social skills



- Especially for infants and toddlers, adults wait for a verbal or nonverbal response before continuing

SLIDE 4: WHAT ARE EXTENDED CONVERSATIONS?

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

For infants and toddlers, adults take on a more active role to help children 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.



CONVERSATIONS USING NOVEL WORDS



- Make conversations longer and more interesting
- Add words related to children's interests
- Focus on building vocabulary

SLIDE 5: CONVERSATIONS USING NOVEL WORDS

- One way to extend conversations with children is to use interesting and novel words.
- Novel words introduce children to new vocabulary related to their interests and activities.
- Intentionally introducing novel words is an effective way to promote children's language skills and learning.
- Children enrolled in Early Head Start and Head Start programs often enter the classroom with limited vocabulary skills. Research by Hart and Risley (1995) suggests that children from low-income backgrounds know several thousand fewer words than their middle-income peers by the time they enter preschool. Therefore, everyone in early learning needs to intentionally focus on building children's vocabulary from birth.
- All conversations are not equal in developing children's language skills. Conversations focused on directives and prohibitions (do this, don't do that) are the least beneficial to infants and toddlers, as well as preschool children. On the other hand, conversations that incorporate running narratives, descriptions of behavior and feelings, wordplay, and thinking aloud are most beneficial to language acquisition (Hart & Risley, 1995).

NOVEL WORDS FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS?



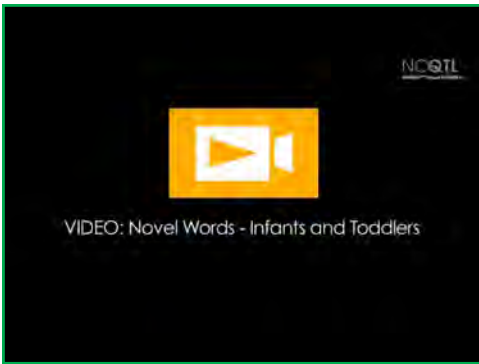
- All words are interesting and novel for infants!
- Introduce more unusual words as children's language develops.

SLIDE 6: NOVEL WORDS FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS?

Is it appropriate to introduce very young children to interesting and novel words?

- For infants, all words are new, so they're *all* interesting and novel. When infants hear language from trusted adults who communicate with them daily, they're motivated to learn and use language. They imitate and reflect back the sounds and intonations they're able to decipher. Over time, as they repeatedly hear and begin to differentiate and reproduce sounds, they refine sounds into words (Shannon, 2012).
- For older toddlers and preschoolers, as they learn more everyday words, teachers can begin to introduce more unusual, novel words into conversations.





Length of video: Approximately 2 minutes and 16 seconds

SLIDE 7: VIDEO: NOVEL WORDS— INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Introduce the video.

In this video, teachers use interesting and novel words with toddlers. Ask participants to notice the variety of novel words: *swirl, view, vein, stem, oxygen, and gravel.*

VIDEO 

DISCUSSION 

Have participants Think-Pair-Share. First, give them time to think about how the teachers introduced novel words into conversations. Then have them work with a partner to share their thoughts about the vocabulary in the video. If time permits, ask volunteers to share their ideas with the large group.



Length of video: Approximately 3 minutes and 32 seconds

SLIDE 8: VIDEO: NOVEL WORDS— PRESCHOOLERS

Introduce the video.

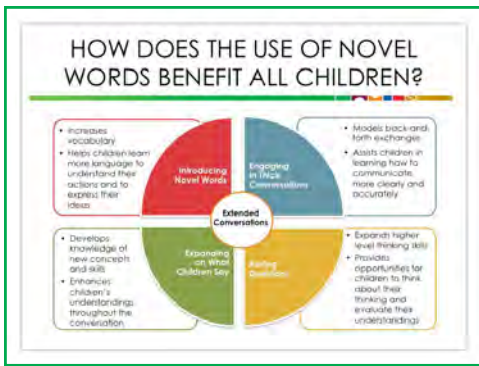
In this video, teachers use novel words in preschool classrooms. Ask participants to notice the variety of novel words the teachers and children exchange.

VIDEO 

DISCUSSION 

Have participants Think-Pair-Share. First, give them time to think about how the teachers introduced novel words into conversations. Then have them work with a partner to share their thoughts about the vocabulary in the video. If time permits, ask volunteers to share their ideas with the large group.





EMPHASIZE *

Using novel words helps expand children's receptive and expressive vocabularies.

SLIDE 9: HOW DOES THE USE OF NOVEL WORDS BENEFIT ALL CHILDREN?

Extended conversations benefit children's:

- Language development
- Cognitive development
- Social and emotional development

For all children, extended conversations:

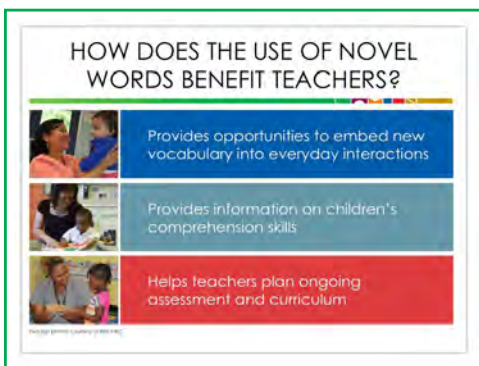
- **Provide models** of appropriate conversation skills.
- **Support** thinking skills through meaningful questioning.
- **Expand** their communications and language by including new concepts and skills.
- **Increase** their receptive and expressive vocabularies by introducing interesting and novel words.

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 fourth component, **introducing novel words**. For children of all ages, conversations that introduce them to novel words:

- Increase their receptive and expressive vocabularies.
- Help them acquire the language they need to express their ideas and feelings.



SLIDE 10: HOW DOES THE USE OF NOVEL WORDS BENEFIT TEACHERS?

Teachers who incorporate novel words into their conversations with children find several benefits, including:

- Opportunities to embed new vocabulary into everyday interactions.
- Information on children's comprehension skills.
- Help with ongoing child assessment and curriculum planning.



USING NOVEL WORDS IN DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS



- Environments that stimulate exploration
- Language-rich environments where teachers can share more specific or unusual words

SLIDE 11: USING NOVEL WORDS IN DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS

Infants and toddlers learn through their senses. As their brains are stimulated, they are primed to learn language. An environment that invites young children to actively explore can inspire everyday conversations that include interesting and novel words.

For infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, play and language learning go hand in hand. Teachers can observe and describe what children are doing, seeing, hearing, touching, and tasting as they explore and discover. Teachers can interpret children's actions and feelings, and describe them with more specific, novel, or unfamiliar words.

INCORPORATING NOVEL WORDS INTO CONVERSATIONS



- Use in activities throughout the day
- Words that are fun to hear and say
- Words that are meaningful to children's lives

SLIDE 12: INCORPORATING NOVEL WORDS INTO CONVERSATIONS

Conversations that incorporate novel words can occur throughout the day and during a variety of routines and experiences. Teachers need to watch for opportunities to use novel words in order to intentionally expose children to more sophisticated language.

Teachers can:

- Use words that pique children's curiosity, have interesting sounds, and are fun to hear and say.
- Incorporate new and interesting words that are meaningful to children's lives. Children can more easily learn words that are attached to their actions, routines, and experiences.





SLIDE 13:

FILL IN INFANTS' AND TODDLERS' GESTURES, WORDS, AND PHRASES

For infants and toddlers, an effective way to incorporate interesting and novel words into a conversation is to pay attention to their gestures, facial expressions, and body language. Teachers can actively watch and listen to vocalizations, words, and phrases, and then respond by filling in what they believe the child is trying to communicate. Teachers can repeat back interesting and novel words in reply to young children's gestures (such as nods and pointing), and also to non-specific vocalizations, words, and phrases that include grunts and saying "this," or "that," or "there."

For example, if a toddler points to the garden and says, "That moving there," a teacher could respond by saying, "Yes, the caterpillar is crawling along the fence post in the garden." This response provides children with rich language to clarify their ideas, and models using advanced vocabulary.

Suppose the toddler in this photo is talking with her teacher about her painting. Her teacher could fill in her gestures, words, and phrases in this way:

Teacher: "Tell me about your painting, Shaqira."

Shaqira: Points to the painting and says, "Birds."

Teacher: "I see lots of big birds flying in a straight line. I wonder where they're going."

Shaqira: "Go home."

Teacher: "Ah. All the birds—the whole flock—are going home to their nests. Do you think their mommies are at the nests waiting to feed them?"

Shaqira: (Nods yes.)

Teacher: "What do you think their mommies will give them to eat?"

Shaqira: "Food."

Teacher: "I'm sure you're right. I bet there will be lots of worms for the birds to feast on."

And so the conversation continues. The teacher adds to and expands on Shaqira's gestures and words. The new vocabulary—*flock*, *worms*, *feast*—connects to concepts she's familiar with (birds, food, eat). This pairing of unfamiliar with familiar words gives her a meaningful context for new words.

By restating and expanding on what children are trying to communicate, teachers can "fill in" children's gestures, vocalizations, words, and phrases using specific words that are more sophisticated and more linguistically complex.





SLIDE 14: FILL IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S PHRASES

NOTE: This animated slide is complex: The thumbnail to the left shows the final image; other images will appear before this one.

For preschool children, one way to incorporate novel words into conversations is to fill in their phrases. Replace empty phrases in the conversation with phrases full of rich vocabulary. Empty-word phrases include words such as: “that thing,” “over there,” and “stuff.”

For example, a child says: “That thing over there is moving.” A teacher could respond: “That squirrel is leaping along the fence top in the garden.” This provides children with rich language to clarify their ideas and hear advanced vocabulary modeled.

Let’s look at an example of a teacher filling in a child’s comments about her artwork.

Child: “I drew the mom and this one and this one and this one.”

Teacher: “I see you drew the mom and then three other people. It looks like this could be your family.”

Child: “Yeah, and we are outside with all these things.”

Teacher: “You are outside playing on the grass. And it looks like it’s raining and sunny at the same time. Together the sun and rain must have created this rainbow. That must be a beautiful sight for your family.”

Child: “And here’s my letters.”

Teacher: “And you wrote your name across the top. I see all the letters of your name, Avery. You also wrote the letters for the word mom.”

This strategy works well for teaching new vocabulary as the modeled words represent familiar concepts directly connected to ideas the child is working to express. This provides an opportunity for meaningful exposure to these new words.

By restating and expanding on children’s comments, teachers can “fill in” children’s phrases using specific words that are more sophisticated and phrases that are linguistically more complex.

OPTIONAL



LEARNING ACTIVITY:

FILLING IN CHILDREN'S PHRASES

This learning activity provides additional practice for participants to fill in young children's gestures, words, and phrases. Use *Filling In Children's Phrases* for this activity.

NOTE

Presenter notes for this optional learning activity are provided at the end of this document.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS



- Communicate within the context of a warm, trusting relationship.
- Use infant-directed speech (IDS).
- Use descriptive language.
- Be an active listener.

SLIDE 15: CONSIDERATIONS FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS

For language interactions and conversations with infants and toddlers, here are further considerations.

NOTE

Some points pick up on ones made earlier in the session (e.g., infant-directed speech).


- Develop warm, trusting relationships with children. When children feel loved and secure, they are better able to learn. Within these relationships, conversations are personal, enjoyable, playful, and individualized to match the child's interests, needs, and temperament.
- The way adults communicate with children influences how infants and toddlers learn language and acquire vocabulary. For example, using gibberish (e.g., "wittle" for little) can impair how infants learn the sounds of letters and how words are pronounced. Infants may also tune out monotone, wordy adult speech.
- However, infants pay attention to infant-directed speech (IDS), sometimes called child-directed speech, parentese, or motherese. IDS typically involves a face-to-face interaction and talk that is high-pitched, sing-song, repetitive, and slower than regular speech; uses an engaging intonation and exaggerated pauses between words; elongates vowels in words; frequently repeats words; and uses diminutive words such as "blanky" and "doggy." This way of talking holds infants' attention and helps them tune in to the sounds of language. This is an important foundation for learning that combinations of sounds form words.
- Infants and toddlers need to hear new words many times during the day and in a variety of contexts. This helps them integrate the sounds and meanings into their long-term memory. Hart and Risley (1995) found that children learned more words when parents conversed with them, provided explanations, and responded to their feelings. Directive and prohibitory language ("Do this" or "Don't do this") failed to build children's vocabularies. But using descriptive language when commenting on what children are doing, seeing, and feeling does build vocabulary. Examples of descriptive language include: "You crawled all the way across the room!" "The mud feels cold, wet, and squishy." "I can see you're frustrated because you can't get the puzzle piece to fit."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



- Use “active listening.” This means paying attention to what children do and say, and responding with descriptive language. It also means slowing down and giving children time to respond with gestures, vocalizations, and words. Active listening lets children know that their communications are important and have value, and is an important part of a mutual, two-way conversation.

PURPOSEFULLY TEACH WORD MEANINGS



- When children encounter unfamiliar words
- When definitions can be naturally embedded
- During storytelling
- When specific words are important for comprehension and everyday interactions

SLIDE 16: PURPOSEFULLY TEACH WORD MEANINGS

Within conversations, teachers can introduce new words and embed their definitions.

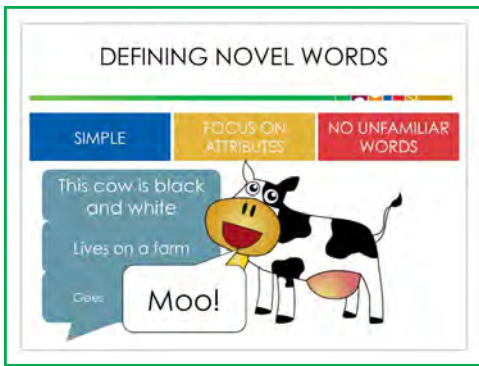
- Explain unfamiliar words when children encounter them. This is an effective way to build children’s vocabularies and teach new concepts.
- Embed simple definitions for new words into conversations in a natural way.
- Use storytelling and book reading to introduce and explain novel words in the context of the story.

It’s especially important to define words that are needed for comprehension and those that occur in children’s everyday interactions.

Embedded definitions should be simple and quick explanations that define the word in the context of how the word is being used. Familiar, child-friendly words in the definition help the child understand.

Storytelling and book reading are two examples of opportunities where it’s appropriate and beneficial to define unfamiliar words. Teachers can support word learning beyond what is provided by the story context or picture clues when they embed definitions into the story explicitly and intentionally.





SLIDE 17: DEFINING NOVEL WORDS

NOTE: This animated slide is complex: The thumbnail to the left shows the final image; other images will appear before this one.

Teachers can enhance children’s word learning by providing developmentally appropriate definitions. When giving definitions, make sure they:

- Are simple and quick explanations.
- Focus on descriptive attributes of objects.
- Include only words that are familiar to the child.

EXAMPLE 1: PILOT

(Image of airplane appears.)

- A pilot is a person
- Who flies a plane
- And takes all the people on the plane where they need to go.

EXAMPLE 2: COW

(Image of cow appears.)

- This cow is black and white
- Lives on a farm
- And goes “moo.”

Additionally, teachers of older and/or verbal toddlers and preschoolers can foster vocabulary development and use definitions by playing guessing games like “I Spy” or asking riddles. For example:

- “I see something that helps keep you warm and cozy when you nap. What is it?”
- “This is something you wear when it’s cold or raining, you zip it up, and it has a hood. What is it?”

OPTIONAL SLIDE PPT

Ask participants if they have dictionaries (for both children and adults) in their classrooms. Have participants share ideas for using dictionaries with preschool children.

NOTE PPT

The article “What Does “Apple” Mean? Learning to Define Words” by Marinellie (2001), referenced in the *Helpful Resources* handout, provides additional information on definitions and children’s development.





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

CONVERSATIONS FROM CHILDREN'S BOOKS

In this activity, participants locate novel words, write child-friendly definitions for them, and use them in role-play conversations.

HANDOUT

Distribute either *Conversations from Books for Infants and Toddlers* or *Conversations from Books for Preschoolers* to each participant and review the directions.

Have participants divide into small groups and provide each group with one or two children's books. Books for infants and toddlers may be simple and have few words on the pages; some are wordless. However, even wordless books are appropriate for this learning activity. Interesting and novel words do not always have to be in print.

Provide time for participants to search through the books for interesting and novel words, write out simple definitions, and then role play conversations that use the books to introduce novel words.

EXAMPLE FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS:

- *Word:* Mush
- *Child-friendly definition:* Mush is hot, thick, soft food like oatmeal.
- *Role play:* Mush is food. It's hot, thick, soft food. It looks like oatmeal. You can eat it with a spoon. See the bowl of mush on the table?

EXAMPLE FOR PRESCHOOLERS:

- *Word:* Reef
- *Child-friendly definition:* A reef is under the water; it can be very sharp and very big. It is like a big rock with holes in it where different animals, like fish, can live.
- *Role play:* "A reef is under the water and it is very big and sharp. The boat needs to go around the reef so it doesn't get caught in it. See the boat going around the reef?"

If time allows, ask volunteers to share their role play with the larger group.

NOTE

If you have the opportunity to contact participants in advance, ask them to bring books from their classrooms for this activity. Encourage participants to bring familiar books and or/new books they're planning to read. This allows them to integrate these strategies directly into their book-reading practices.





Length of video: Approximately 3 minutes and 46 seconds

SLIDE 18: VIDEO: CONVERSATION WITH NOVEL WORDS—INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Introduce the video.

In this video, teachers introduce novel words in their extended conversations with infants and toddlers. Ask participants to notice the variety of novel words teachers use and how the children respond.

VIDEO 

DISCUSSION 

Ask participants to share their observations from these examples.



Length of video: Approximately 1 minute and 30 seconds

SLIDE 19: VIDEO: CONVERSATION WITH NOVEL WORDS—PRESCHOOLERS

Introduce the video.

In this video, a teacher introduces novel words in her extended conversation with a child. Ask participants to notice the variety of novel words the teacher uses and how the child responds.

VIDEO 

DISCUSSION 

Ask participants to share their observations from this example.



TIPS FOR INCORPORATING NOVEL WORDS



- Select words that are used in everyday interactions.
- Take advantage of spontaneous conversations and use rich vocabulary.



- Expand on what children know.
- Help children understand words that support thinking and reasoning.
- Introduce children to novel words throughout the day and across activities and routines.

SLIDE 20: TIPS FOR INCORPORATING NOVEL WORDS

- Select words used in everyday interactions that describe what children are doing and feeling. Then plan for opportunities to introduce children to novel words in meaningful ways.
- Take advantage of spontaneous conversations with children and use interesting words in these conversations. For example, “Your block tower is so **tall**. It looks like a **skyscraper**. **Skyscrapers** are the **tallest** buildings in a city. They go up and up and up, and they look like they touch the sky!”
- Expand on what children know. Be aware of the words each child already understands, and add interesting new words that represent familiar concepts. For example, if a child understands the meaning of **yummy**, he is likely to learn the word **delicious** through meaningful exposures to this word.
- Help children understand words that support thinking and reasoning. For example, **relational words** help children compare, contrast, and revise what they currently understand. Using words related to quantity, time, location, and size will help children understand their actions and the world around them.
- Have conversations throughout the day, including meals, arrival and departure, diapering/toileting, dressing, play experiences, reading stories, and outdoor time.

NOTE

Relational words refer to relationships among people, objects, or events. These include terms that refer to quantity (more, less); time (before, after); location (in, on, under, next to, behind, in back of, and in front of); and size (big, little, long, short). These words are also the language of math and science!





SLIDE 21: EXPANDING YOUR RESOURCES

Incorporating novel words into conversations takes planning and intentionality. Several resources can help teachers identify and intentionally incorporate interesting and novel words into conversations.

Identify novel words

Brainstorm with colleagues and the children's families:

- Make a list of interesting and novel words that relate to the children's home lives and the program's routines, play experiences, and classroom projects and themes. Select several words that you think the children in your classroom would like and include these in your daily conversations.

Search for interesting and novel words that children will encounter:

- Examine the children's books in your classroom and those used in daily read alouds.
- Read children's poems and listen to children's songs, chants, rhymes, and finger plays.
- Use a thesaurus to find alternative ways to say the same word. For example, when children are playing with water in small tubs or at the water table, instead of always using the word *wet*, begin to incorporate words such as *soaked*, *drenched*, *damp*, and *moist* into conversations with children. Or, if you often find yourself using the term *interesting*, begin to use similar words such as *exciting*, *intriguing*, and *fascinating*.
- Identify words in children's home languages and in English.

Plan ahead and define novel words:

- Plan to use interesting and novel words that fit with children's individual plans, as well as with toddlers' and preschoolers' weekly classroom plans, or studies and projects. Create a list of developmentally appropriate definitions for these words. This list can then be used for planning and posted in the room for easy reference.

Select and describe classroom materials

Teachers can be specific and descriptive when they refer to toys, equipment, and materials in the indoor and outdoor environments. Items that are used during routines and play experiences can provide opportunities to help children build receptive and expressive vocabulary.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Teachers can also intentionally select toys, equipment, and materials that introduce interesting and novel words. For example: *wind chime, streamer, teether, easel, and collage*; pretend play toys such as *cradle, carriage, carpet sweeper, colander, stethoscope, and helmet*; musical toys and instruments such as *xylophone, maracas, tambourine, and cymbals*; toy vehicles such as *ambulance, crane, and helicopter*; sand and water toys such as *funnel, sieve, baster*; and people figures (*astronaut, pediatrician, chef*).

When children interact with these items they learn the vocabulary and definition of these words through meaningful exposure in conversations with teachers. Further, by providing these items, teachers are reminded to use these words with children throughout the day.

Choose children's books for the classroom that have rich language (or allow teachers to add their own rich language) and vivid illustrations. Some examples include wordless books like *Good Dog, Carl* by Alexandra Day; picture books with simple texts like *Hello, Day* by Anita Lobel; rhyming books like *Is Your Mama a Llama?* by Deborah Guarino; predictable books like *Ten in the Den* by John Butler; and concept books like *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle. Children can learn unfamiliar vocabulary by listening to and having conversations about children's books.

Provide visual reminders

Novel word lists: Posted throughout the classroom, these lists can remind teachers and other teaching staff to use interesting words in their conversations with children.

Sticky notes: Identify interesting and novel words and write them on sticky notes. As a reminder to use the words, place the notes around the classroom or on materials used for planned experiences, activities, and routines.

Display words: On a word wall or word tree, novel word displays work as a reminder for teachers and provide a visual representation for children.

NOTE

Be prepared with these examples and invite participants to share their ideas.





LEARNING ACTIVITY: BRAINSTORMING NOVEL WORDS

In this activity, participants identify and share examples of interesting and novel words for indoor (classroom) and outdoor environments.

HANDOUT

Distribute either *Brainstorming Novel Words Around the Indoor and Outdoor Environments—Infants and Toddlers*, or *Brainstorming Novel Words Around the Classroom—Preschoolers* to each participant and review the directions.

- If you're meeting with teachers in their classroom, have them tour the different areas of the room and/or outdoor play space. For programs serving young infants, there will likely be areas for routines (greeting, diapering, feeding/meals, napping, nursing); for play experiences such as toys and gross motor; and large spaces to be with adults. An older infant and toddler classroom will likely have areas for routines and experiences (such as blocks, toys, pretend play, books, sensory, and art). Preschool classrooms will likely have various learning centers (book reading, writing, math, science, dramatic play). As participants tour the areas, invite them to create a vocabulary list of new and interesting words for each area. Remind them to use verbs and adjectives as well as nouns.
- If you're not in a classroom, use photographs that show areas in infant and toddler and preschool programs, and complete the same brainstorming activity.
- If you can contact participants prior to the training, ask them to bring photos of the different areas of their rooms to use for this activity.

Have participants brainstorm in small groups to create their novel word lists.

DISCUSSION

Invite volunteers from each group to share their list with the large group and encourage participants to write down additional words.

NOTE

The goal is for participants to leave with many new and interesting words to use when talking with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.



SUMMARY



- Provide intentional exposure to meaningful new words.
- Purposefully define words.
- Offer opportunities to use novel words.

SLIDE 22: SUMMARY

Teachers can support rich language acquisition by infants, toddlers, and preschool children by introducing novel and interesting words into conversations. It takes intentionality!

Intentional conversations help young children learn interesting, fun, and unusual words by:

- Introducing meaningful new words.
- Providing age-appropriate definitions and context.
- Offering opportunities to use interesting and novel words.

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 build extended conversations using novel words.
- *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 that introduce them to novel words.





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 to each participant.

NOTE

Remind participants that infants and toddlers “converse” with facial expressions, gestures, body language, and vocalizations as well as words. Also, emphasize the importance of using novel words in the children’s home languages as well as English.

Introduce the activity.

Use this handout to plan when and how to have extended conversations with children:

- Select an appropriate time of day and location.
- Outline the topic of conversation and how it fits children’s interests.
- Brainstorm meaningful questions that promote thinking.
- Plan how to expand the conversation.
- List novel words that can be incorporated into the conversation.

If you are training in a classroom, provide time for participants to use different areas of the room and materials as they plan their conversations. Participants can work alone or in pairs and then organize into small groups to share their action plans. If time allows, bring the large group back together and have several volunteers share their plans.





SLIDE 23: 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.

Novel Words 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*



OPTIONAL

FILLING IN CHILDREN'S PHRASES (YOUNG INFANT)



FILLING IN CHILDREN'S PHRASES (TODDLER)



FILLING IN CHILDREN'S PHRASES (PRESCHOOL)



FILLING IN CHILDREN'S PHRASES (PRESCHOOL)



LEARNING ACTIVITY: FILLING IN CHILDREN'S PHRASES

The recommended placement for this learning activity is after Slide 14.

There is no handout for this learning activity. It provides additional practice for participants to fill in children's gestures, words, and phrases. The PowerPoint with four slides is included with this in-service suite.

The slides include these visual aids:

- A photo of a young infant reaching toward rings on an activity center
- A 19-month-old toddler's artwork
- Two slides with examples of preschool children's art work

Ask participants to work with a partner and think through how they would engage each child in a conversation about their activity or artwork. Remind participants to fill in children's gestures, vocalizations, words, and phrases by using interesting and novel words.

The following statements from children can be used as conversation starters, or participants can create their own.

- "Look at this."
- "It took really long to make all these things."
- "The sun is making these beautiful!"

NOTE

At first, participants may extend the conversation by asking questions about the child's drawing or activity. Work to help participants identify ways to extend the conversation by using a more varied vocabulary. It may be helpful to bring examples to the training in order to provide the participants with additional support if needed.

It may also be helpful to review the examples on Slides 13 and 14.