



TIPS FOR ENGAGING CHILDREN IN CONVERSATIONS

Teachers play a critical role in developing language-rich classroom environments. Here are a few practical ways in which teachers can support and engage children in conversations.

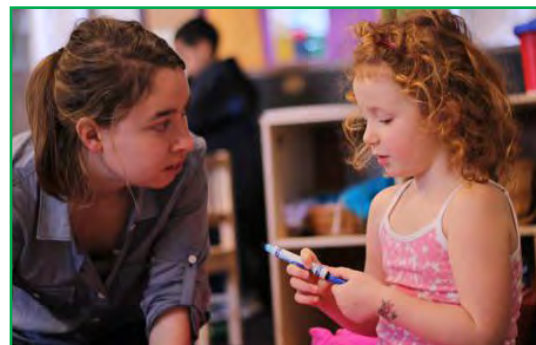
SET THE STAGE:

- Get down on the child's level.
- Listen to what the child says.
- Match the tone of the conversation to the child's affect.
- Take turns in talking.



START THE CONVERSATION:

- Talk about what the child is doing or what the child is interested in.
- Ask questions that relate to the child's experiences or interests.
- Add to what the child says and model new language.
- Give the child enough time to respond.





FOLLOW THE **CAR**:



FOLLOW THE CHILD'S LEAD AND THEN:

- **Comment and wait.**
- **Ask a question and wait.**
- **Respond by adding a little more and wait.**

Adapted with permission.

StoryQUEST: Celebrating beginning language and literacy, first year annual report. (April, 2004). Unpublished report, California Institute on Human Services, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, CA.

Cole, K., Maddox, M., Notari-Syverson, A., & Lim, Y.S. (2006). *Language is the key: Video programs for building language and literacy in early childhood.* Seattle, WA: Washington Learning Systems.