



Toddler: Language Modeling

Title: Encouraging Language with Play-doh

In this toddler classroom, the teacher models language through conversations and questioning as the children sculpt items out of Play-doh.

Supporting Language Use

- The teacher uses conversational language and provides many opportunities for the children to use language in the classroom. The teacher asks open-ended questions that give the children an opportunity to engage in back-and-forth exchanges:
 - “What does a sword look like?”
 - “Where is your car going, Turner? Where are you going in your car?”
 - “What is that, Aubrey?”
- The teacher follows a child’s conversational lead using contingent responding by asking, “What is in town?” and “Well, why not?”

Repetition and Extension

- The teacher acknowledges the children’s verbal contributions by repeating words and phrases, “a sword,” “to town,” “snakes,” and “You’re not scared of snakes?”

Advanced Language

- The teacher connects the word sculptor to familiar words and ideas, “Do you know what a sculptor is? Someone who sculpts and makes things out of different things. Like, if I used Play-doh to sculpt a car, then I would be a sculptor of sorts, but not a very good one.”
- The teacher in this classroom consistently uses complete sentences when speaking to the child. Examples include:
 - “I am not a very good sculptor.”
 - “Ms. Laura is scared of snakes.”
 - “If you like snakes, Carter, you are very brave.”

Language modeling describes how teachers intentionally encourage, respond to, and expand on children’s language. In this example, the teacher uses conversational language and provides frequent opportunities for the child to use language in conversations. By employing these strategies, teachers provide children with a variety of words and opportunities to understand and use language in the classroom.