



Toddler: Language Modeling

Title: Supporting Language Use during Individual Play

In this toddler classroom, the teacher uses a variety of language-stimulation techniques to encourage a child's language development as she plays with hands-on materials.

Supporting Language Use

- The teacher elicits a conversation with a child playing on the rug, "What are you playing with?"
- The teacher uses open-ended questions that give the child an opportunity to use language, "What else do you see there? What else do you see, Morgan?" and "What do you see?"
- The teacher encourages Morgan to use language, "Use your words," and "Can you say a green ball?"

Repetition and Extension

- The teacher acknowledges a child's verbal contribution by repeating the word "yellow" and extends the child's response, "Yes, that's the yellow and red."
- The teacher also expands on Morgan's label of a spoon, "You do eat off the spoon but this is a pretend spoon so we have to pretend, okay?"
- The teacher continues to repeat and extend Morgan's comments, "Yellow, that is a yellow ball, and you put it together with a yellow stick."

Self- and Parallel Talk

- The teacher narrates her own actions when she says, "Ms. Jones is going to move this chair so she can help you, Morgan."

Advanced Language

- The teacher labels and describes unfamiliar objects, "It's a magnet. It's called a magnet, it sticks together." "It's called a ruler and you measure things with it." "A green ball is like a circle. It's round."
- The teacher consistently labels other objects in the classroom ("the blue ball," "a red ball," "a green ball," and "spoon").
- The teacher in this classroom consistently uses complete sentences when speaking to the child. For example, "Let's put them back together so when our other friends come in, they'll have something to play with so that we don't lose them."
- The teacher connects the word yellow to familiar words and ideas, "You know what? I know something else that's yellow. A banana."

Language modeling describes how teachers intentionally encourage, respond to, and expand on children's language. In this example, the use of language takes the form of contingent responding; the teacher interprets and responds to the child's communicative attempts (verbal and non-verbal). By employing these strategies, teachers provide children with a variety of words and opportunities to understand and use language in the classroom.