



Arranging the Social Environment

Adults can support adult and child interactions and communication throughout the day. Both at home and at childcare, support communication and relationship building by building opportunities for communication into the social environment.

Plan activities that encourage children to interact and play together. Activities such as building blocks, musical instruments, encourage children to engage in social interactions and play.

Modify activities you typically engage in to promote social interaction. Even when children are too young to engage in cooperative play, you can start to build in opportunities to observe and practice communication.

Listen and respond to children's attempts to communicate so you can encourage them to talk. During your pauses, watch and listen for child attempts to communicate – this might include words and sounds, but also looks, reaching, or kicking feet to show excitement.

Position yourself and young children so you are facing each other and you are at the child's eye level, whenever possible.

Create fun pairings of sounds or phrases with specific actions so they become **predictable**. If a child puts a hat on your head, let the hat fall off and say, "Off." If a toddler is cleaning up by putting farm animals into a box, say "Good night horse, good night cow," etc. Repeat the routine several times to allow the child to predict and imitate the phrase.

Use community outings to provide new opportunities for communication. Show children how you greet the cashier in a store. Look for an opportunity to interact with the librarian, or with other children at the park, and **model** positive communication and interaction.

Center Tips



Consider ways you can encourage children to notice and observe others

- ✓ Position infants and non-mobile children so they can observe and interact with one another
- ✓ During book or circle times, ensure infants can observe older infants and toddlers and see how they are communicating
- ✓ Greet friends, using their name, as they join circle time in the classroom
- ✓ When planning activities, build in opportunities for communication and interactions
- ✓ Plan ways introduce new vocabulary and provide opportunities for back-and-forth interactions between peers, as well as adults and children

Environment

Organize and plan to promote communication & interaction

