



Following the Child's Lead with Children Who Use Gestures & Sounds

Ideas for Following the Child's Lead During Activities



Play

- If a child is playing with a ball, find another ball and play in a similar way, or initiate rolling the ball back and forth. Describe the child's actions, how the ball bounces high, rolls so far, or how the child is catching the ball.
- Allow children to direct your play activities together. If a child is lining up the blocks to make a road, join in the activity and build the road together. Try to avoid directing the child to build the road a certain way, or to build something else. Ask open-ended questions about where the road might be going, or how to build onto the road.
- If a child is coloring or painting dots, allow the child to continue doing this rather than directing the child to paint a picture.



Daily Routines

- Observe and talk about the foods children are eating at snack or lunch time. *"Krystal is eating crackers." "What are you eating now, Dion?"* While handing out cups, ask, *"What color is your cup, Sam?"*
- While changing diapers or dressing, notice where children are looking and talk about the focus of their attention. *"What do you see up there?"* If the child is watching you, comment on what you are doing. *"We are putting on your shirt. Here is your arm!" "Now I am going to wash my hands."*
- During clean-up time, listen to what children say and respond by adding more information. If a child says, *"doggy,"* you might say, *"Yes, we're picking up the dogs and putting them away."*



Books

- When a child is looking at books, join in and offer to read the book with them. If the child wants to look at the pictures and turn the pages, follow the child's lead and name or ask open-ended questions about what you see in the pictures.
- If a child is not currently engaged in an activity, pick out two books the child might enjoy and ask, *"Which book would you like to read?"*
- If a child turns pages while reading a story, follow the child's lead and talk about the page they turned to.

Help children with limited movement point at pictures or turn pages with you. Observe the child to see where the child is looking and respond by describing what they see.

Follow Child's Lead

Notice and talk about child's interests, activities, & materials

