



Following the Child's Lead with Children Who Use Words

Ideas for Following the Child's Lead During Activities



Play

- While playing, a child places a doll in a bed. Describe the child's activity. *"Baby is sleeping. 'Night, baby."* Place another doll in the bed. Wait for the child to respond.
- A child watches a large truck and people working outside the window. Respond by sitting next to the child and saying, *"Oh, that's a big truck. What are they doing out there?"* This can start a conversation about the activities of the workers and their trucks.
- While playing outside, watch and describe the children's movements and actions. *"You're climbing up the ladder, and sliding down the slide."* *"You are pushing the shopping cart. What are you shopping for?"*
- Notice what the child is coloring and describe the colors, the shapes, and even the scribbles. Ask *"What should I draw?"* and draw what the child asks you to draw.



Daily Routines

- While preparing for naptime, let children help get ready and comment on their sheets or blankets. *"You have sheets with bears."* *"That is a pretty blanket."*
- During meals, talk about the foods everyone is eating. *"What are we having today?"* *"I like apples. Where do apples grow?"* Wait for children to respond, and then continue talking about the foods they are eating.
- During daily routines such as diapering, dressing, or nap, notice if the child is awake and excited, or quiet and sleepy. Follow their lead and adjust your energy level and tone to theirs and to the activity as you talk about your activities or about the day.



Books

- When a child points to pictures in a book, observe and respond by asking open-ended questions. *"What are they doing?"* *"Who is that?"* *"Where are they going?"* or *"Why did they do that?"* This can open up a conversation about what they see in the book.
- During circle time, allow children to choose books to read together. Let different children make their choices each day as everyone is getting ready to sit down.
- Think back on the activities of the day when choosing books. If children played restaurant in the morning, offer the choice of a book about foods or eating.
- As you look at books together, observe where children are looking or the pages they turn to most often. Offer more detailed descriptions for those parts of the book.

Follow Child's Lead

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

