



THEME Conversations with Children

Engaging children in conversation is important because it helps them develop language. Everyday activities provide the opportunity to engage children in conversation which will help them learn to express their thoughts and feelings. Children need many opportunities to talk—with each other, with adults, one-on-one, and in groups. Be sure to LISTEN, smile, nod your head, and show with your body language that you are interested!

Ask open-ended questions during conversations to stimulate language, creative thought, and individuality. Here are a few examples of open-ended questions:

- Tell me about...
- What do you think?
- Show me how you...
- I wonder why...
- How do you know that...?
- How did you do that?
- Can you tell me more about why...?
- What do you think would happen if...?

Book Suggestions and YouTube Recommendations:

- The Three Little Pigs Retold and illustrated by James Marshall
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4F-22Y6Wg60>
- Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? by Bill Martin Jr/Eric Carle
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WST-B8zQleM>
- The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75NQK-Sm1YY>

Ideas for At Home Activities:

Mealtime	Mealtimes are about more than just feeding your child because they offer many opportunities for conversations with your child. As you begin the meal preparation process, talk with your child about the changes that take place when different foods are cooked or baked, etc. Ask open-ended questions by using the starter examples listed above (Example: What do you think will happen to the meat after we fry it in the pan?). Assign your child a job to assist with the preparation process, like setting the table. As your child is setting the table you can incorporate math by counting the number of plates, etc. that will be needed. Also, it is important to take time to sit with your child during mealtimes. You can initiate conversations
----------	--

	about the foods you are eating (texture, colors, temperature). Most importantly—start small! Set goals and slowly integrate the process of having intentional conversations with your child during mealtimes.
In the car	Traveling in the car with your child is another great opportunity to have meaningful conversations. If there are multiple stops on your trip, you can talk to your child about where you will be going first, next, and last. You can also incorporate math by counting the number of stop signs between each destination . Ask open-ended questions about what you will do at each stop (Ask, “Are we turning left or right?”). Also, you can use the open-ended question starters.
Outside/Free Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play “I Spy” game: Spying by color or beginning sounds. Create an obstacle course. Have a conversation of what materials you may use to create the obstacle course. • Lay down and look at the clouds, tell a grown-up what shapes you see; Use wet sidewalk chalk to draw on the wet ground. Does it look different than the dry chalk? • Make a pretend phone with Legos/blocks, pretend to call a family member, and have a conversation: Hi mom, are you cooking supper for us? What are you cooking tonight? You are making spaghetti with meatballs! I love eating spaghetti with meatballs! (adult is encouraged to follow the child’s lead with the conversation). • Pour a little flour on a cookie sheet. Allow your child to use their finger to practice writing lines, shapes, letters, or numbers.
Bath time	Add food coloring to the bath water: make a prediction if adding one color, ask the child what he/she thinks will happen to the water? What happens if two colors are added (for example yellow and blue), make a prediction of what will happen to the water. Gather a dinosaur, plastic spoon, barbie doll, Lego block, etc., and experiment which items sink and float in the bathtub.
Bedtime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read or listen to one of the recommended books mentioned above, have a conversation of retelling the story (beginning, middle, and end; the characters; the problem of the story, etc...) • Discuss in sequential order (from the beginning of the day to the end of the day) what the child did during the day.

RESOURCES

- www.eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov
- www.naeyc.org
- www.coxcampus.org
- www.pre-kpages.com
- www.playtolearnpreschool.com
- www.resourcesforearlylearning.org

*The resources contained on this website contain materials and tools that may be used to provide additional resources to parents or students. This information is only intended to be a general summary of information provided to the public. The Mississippi Department of Education does not endorse or promote any commercial products or services. The views and opinion of authors expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the MDE, and they may not be used for advertising or product endorsement purposes. Please make sure that you choose the tool(s), resource(s) or material(s) that are developmentally appropriate and best fit the needs of your students, school, or district.