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Garfield County DHS Childcare Quality and Licensing

Friday Tip
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“Talking Points” for Interactions with Children

Follow the child’s lead: Respond to them with interest and build on what they’re saying. Use language that is appropriate to the child’s age and vocabulary level.

Give enough wait time: When working with children, give plenty of time for them to initiate a conversation. For example, after greeting a child at the sand table, a teacher might wait a few seconds before talking to allow the child time to initiate a conversation.

Turn-taking: Although children need to hear adults talk in order to learn language skills, they also need time to practice talking themselves. Wait several seconds in between statements or after asking a question to allow the children.

Mirroring: Repeating what a child has said gives the adult an opportunity to clarify their understanding and shows the child that the adult is listening. Similarly, commenting on what a child is doing gives them the language to match their actions. “You’re building with blocks.” Or, “I see you pointing, you want more water.”

Modeling: Similar to mirroring, modeling repeats what a child has said, but the teacher uses the opportunity to show the correct language. If a child says, “I drank all the wa-wa,” the teacher might say, “Yes, you drank all of the water.” Adults don’t need to tell the child that they said it wrong, or make them repeat it correctly. As their language skills develop, children will begin to pick up on the subtleties of sentences and pronunciation.

These “talking points” were adapted from an Expanding Quality in Infant and Toddler Care hand-out. If you’re interested in taking EQ, another class will be offered in the spring. Classes are free and meet requirements for group leader qualification and special home licenses. Call Dana at 945-9191 ext 3066 or visit our website for more information.

Looking for more?

Any of the child care consultants or Dana would be happy to talk with you about language development in young children, including information about typical developmental markers. If you have a concern about a child’s language development, your local Child Find office is a good resource:

Basalt, Carbondale,
Glenwood 970-384-6006
New Castle, Silt, Rifle
970-625-6802
Parachute 970-285-5702