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| **Supporting Children’s Language Skills**  The first five years of a child’s life are a critical period for language development. In preschool, children are quickly acquiring a variety of new words and learning how to communicate effectively with peers and adults. Teachers can support language development by providing plenty of opportunities for children to talk in academic and social settings with rich back and forth exchanges. Below are some interaction and instruction strategies that provide opportunities for children to develop their language skills. |

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| **Interaction and Instruction (I&I) Strategies** | **Description** | **Aligned CLASS® Dimensions** |
| 1. **Encourage children to talk** | Ask open-ended questions, answer children’s questions, and ask children to summarize or retell information. Have academic and social conversations, treating children as valued conversational partners. | image.png |
| 1. **Acknowledge, expand, and extend children’s communication attempts** | Repeat and elaborate on what children say. Be a ‘sportscaster’: narrate what children are doing. Ask questions that encourage longer answers, prompt children to explain their thinking, and provide hints when children seem to struggle. | image.pngimage.png |
| 1. **Use, define, and repeat a variety of words, including actions** | Expose children to a rich vocabulary by using a variety of words and child-friendly definitions during instruction, play, and transitions. Narrate your actions, children’s actions, and comment on characters’ actions in books. |  |

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| 1. **Encourage children to talk** | **Description:** Ask open-ended questions, answer children’s questions, and ask children to summarize or retell information. Have academic and social conversations, treating children as valued conversational partners. | | | **Aligned CLASS Dimensions:** | | |
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|  | **Choose one of the following resources and individualize to your needs.**  **Determine which aspects you’d like to use (or not).** | | | | |
| * [Engaging Children in Conversations](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/engaging-children-conversations)   This ECLKC in-service suite discusses teaching practices to engage children in conversations that can support learning in the classroom. | | * [Conversations with Children! Questions that Spark Conversations and Deepen Understanding](https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/apr2018/conversations-with-children)   This NAEYC article describes different kinds of questions teachers can ask children, the various skills children need to answer those questions, and how asking and answering questions can build teacher-child relationships. | * [Asking Questions](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/asking-questions)   This ECLKC in-service suite provides strategies for using questions to extend conversations with children. | | |
|  | **Select one or two video(s) to watch focusing on:**  **What does the teacher say and do related to *encouraging children to talk*?**  **How do the children respond?** | | | | |
| * [The Bear](https://view.vzaar.com/11804957/player?apiOn=true&GAOn=true) | | * [9-1-1 Emergency Conversation during Center Time](https://aeiionline.org/advancing-effective-interactions-and-instruction-2/tools-resources/for-use-in-professional-development/standalone-player/?v=1_64is4shy&t=9-1-1+Emergency+Conversation+during+Centers) | * [Winter Weather Conversation during Breakfast](https://aeiionline.org/advancing-effective-interactions-and-instruction-2/tools-resources/for-use-in-professional-development/standalone-player/?v=1_pjmgtmp8&t=Winter+Weather+Conversation+during+Breakfast) | | |
|  | **Ideas for SMART goals. Pick one Do strategy to try as is or modify to better fit your goals.** | | | | |
| * Schedule time each day to engage in social conversations with 3-5 children. Plan to ask open-ended questions about their expressed interests or experiences. * During group work time, ask 2 or more open-ended questions to engage children in discussion. Provide ample time for children to respond and model conversational practices such as appropriate turn-taking and active listening. | | | | | |

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| **2. Acknowledge, expand, and extend children's communication attempts** | **Description:** Repeat and elaborate on what children say. Be a ‘sportscaster’: narrate what children are doing. Ask questions that encourage longer answers, prompt children to explain their thinking, and provide hints when children seem to struggle. | | | **Aligned CLASS Dimensions:** | | | |
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|  | **Choose one of the following resources or sets of resources and individualize to your needs.**  **Determine which aspects you’d like to use (or not).** | | | | | |
| * [Expansions](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/expansions)   Expansions are ways to expand on what a child says or does during a conversation. This in-service suite describes how to use expansions to extend conversations with children to promote their language development. | | * [Thick and Thin Conversations](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/thick-thin-conversations-birth-five)   "Thick" conversations are the extended back-and-forth exchanges between a teacher and a child. This in-service suite describes teaching practices to engage infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in "thick" conversations. | | | | |
|  | **Select one-two video(s) to watch focusing on:**  **What does the teacher say and do related to *expanding, extending, and acknowledging children’s communication attempts?***  **How do the children respond?** | | | | | |
| * [New Big Sister](https://view.vzaar.com/11804946/player?apiOn=true&GAOn=true) | | * [Talking about the Butterfly Puzzle](https://aeiionline.org/advancing-effective-interactions-and-instruction-2/tools-resources/for-use-in-professional-development/standalone-player/?v=1_tueo508b&t=Talking+about+the+Butterfly+Puzzle) | | | | |
|  | **Ideas for SMART goals. Pick one Do strategy to try as is or modify to better fit your goals.** | | | | | |
| * Narrate as children play during center time in order to describe their actions. Ask children open-ended questions about their play to encourage extended conversations. * Engage in conversations during mealtimes. Repeat and extend at least one child’s words to expand on their phrases and add appropriate complexity. * Aim for 3 or more back-and-forth exchanges with children! Use varied strategies: repeat and elaborate, narrate, ask questions, provide hints. | | | | | | |

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| **3. Use, define, and repeat a variety of words, including actions** | **Description:** Expose children to a rich vocabulary by using a variety of words and child-friendly definitions during instruction, play, and transitions. Narrate your actions, children’s actions, and comment on characters’ actions in books with intentionality in your use of vocabulary. | | | **Aligned CLASS Dimensions:** | | |
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|  | **Choose one of the following resources or sets of resources and individualize to your needs.**  **Determine which aspects you’d like to use (or not).** | | | | |
| * [Novel Words](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/novel-words)   This ECLKC in-service suite describes how to use everyday discussions with children to help them learn more vocabulary words. | | * [Taking Delight in Words: Using Oral Language to Build Young Children's Vocabularies](https://www.readingrockets.org/article/taking-delight-words-using-oral-language-build-young-childrens-vocabularies)   This article provides ideas for enhancing vocabulary by teaching words from text on teaching words from texts that are read aloud to children and presents activities that help young children make sense of new words. | | | |
|  | **Select one-two video(s) to watch focusing on:**  **What does the teacher say and do related to defining and repeating a variety of words, including actions?**  **How do the children respond?** | | | | |
| * [Attract and Repel](http://eclkc.vzaar.me/4502085) | | * [Novel Words](http://eclkc.vzaar.me/4501099) | | | |
|  | **Ideas for SMART goals. Pick one Do strategy to try as is or modify to better fit your goals.** | | | | |
| * During center time, use new vocabulary to narrate and describe a child’s play. Use your knowledge of a child’s existing vocabulary to layer on new words that build on familiar concepts. * While reading to children, call attention to vocabulary and use child-friendly definitions to explain and contextualize new words. * During group instruction, narrate children’s and your own actions (e.g. “I see you’re raising your hand! You look very excited to answer.” and “I am writing down what you say on this easel…”) | | | | | |

**Sample Action Plan:**

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| Action Plan: Provide opportunities to support vocabulary development (I&I Strategy) | |
| KNOW  Week of 11/09/20 | Learn ways to expose children to rich vocabulary by using a variety of words and child-friendly definitions during instruction, play, and transitions. Learn strategies for intentionally incorporating expanded vocabulary as you narrate your actions, children’s actions, and comment on characters’ actions in books.  Resource: [Novel Words](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/novel-words)  As you are reviewing this resource, consider how you can plan to intentionally identify novel words, select materials that expand children’s vocabulary development, and prepare child-friendly definitions in advance. |
| SEE  Week of 11/09/20 | Watch: [Attract and Repel](http://eclkc.vzaar.me/4502085) |
| DO  Week of 11/16/20 | Each day during center time, use new vocabulary to narrate and describe a child’s play. Use your knowledge of a child’s existing vocabulary to layer on new words that build on familiar concepts. |
| Follow Up  Week of 11/16/20 | Feedback provider:   * Will observe center time (11/11 from 9:45-10:15) * Will note ways teacher supports vocabulary development during center time (11/11 from 9:45-10:15) * Will have a reflective conference with teacher following observation (11/16 from 2:15 - 3:00) |