

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING cont.

- Use transitions between activities such as songs, sign language, and finger plays incorporating actions during transitions. These are especially helpful for children with limited communication skills.
- Listen attentively; don't rush children's speech. Follow children's lead in the conversation and show interest by being at the child's level.
- Explain the meaning of words during conversations and story time. Use the new words in a variety of contexts throughout the day.
- Use photos of children doing *routine* activities throughout the day to help those who have difficulty with understanding directions.
- Help children *discriminate* sounds in spoken language through rhymes, songs, and word games, using various media (CDs, tablets, computers, smart boards).
- Encourage children to retell and act out stories. Ask questions about books and stories.
- Talk about actions (both the adult's and the child's) while they are happening. This is referred to as "mapping your actions". Think of interesting words to describe details and actions (if pretending to wash dishes, talk about scrubbing and scouring or when outside, describe the sounds).
- Use enjoyable books, poems, rhymes, finger plays, and songs that children can repeat frequently.
- Provide opportunities for children to talk in front of a mirror so they can see the movement of their mouth and the sound they are making at the same time.
- Utilize books and activities to come up with opposites for words (antonyms), as well as multiple words that have similar meanings (synonyms) such as pet, pat, stroke, nuzzle.
- Use facial expressions, *gestures*, sign language, and a rich and varied *vocabulary* when speaking and reading with children.
- Teach and *reinforce* subject-specific words when using them in context (discuss caterpillar, chrysalis, butterfly, metamorphosis, etc. when hatching butterflies) and then continue to use these words throughout the year.
- Give children clear instructions that help them move from simple directions to a more complex sequence. State directions positively, respectfully, carefully, and only as needed.
- Engage children in one on one, peer to peer, and small group conversations for more opportunities to express themselves than they would in a large group. This approach provides opportunities to monitor children's communication skills and comprehension.
- Pass around a "Talking Stick" or other item that can be used as an indicator of whose turn it is to talk or contribute to a group conversation.
- Ask *open-ended questions* to encourage conversation and *stimulate* children's thinking, communication skills, and creativity.