



PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

STAFF ORIENTATION INFORMATION

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OUR VISION

The Lemberg Children's Center at Brandeis University is an excellent school for young children where all teachers and adults share a unifying vision and work together toward common educational goals and purposes.

One of our goals is to ensure successful developmentally appropriate learning and achievement in mathematics and reasoning, language and communication, the arts, science, and nature, as well as athletics and physical development. In addition, an equally essential purpose and goal of ours is to help each child build the social and emotional skills that will be needed to successfully negotiate the diverse cultural and social expectations of the communities in which they live.

We believe that in the best early education programs each adult has an important role and that every interaction affects the learning of each child in the program. Adult-child interactions make a difference in the life of the child, the adult, and the community. It is also true that each child-to-child interaction affects the happiness and learning of those children. In child-child interactions, adults take on the vital role of offering guidance and support while encouraging creativity, problem-solving and the making of choices.

To achieve our goals for children's growth and development, all the adults at Lemberg -- from the newest intern or work-study student to the Executive Director -- must share in our vision and act in ways that help to nurture each child, helping children to feel safe, trusting, and deeply cared about. Children must be guided to value the happiness of others as well as themselves. This can only happen when each adult is part of a community wide effort to practice these policies and values toward each other.

THE ROLE OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS (TAs) AND TRAINEES (TRs)

The professional staff in the center is supplemented by teaching assistants (TAs). They are student teachers from Brandeis and surrounding colleges, Brandeis federally sponsored work-study students, college students and other adults wishing to work with young children. Before being selected to work with children, all teaching assistants and interns are interviewed and screened by the professional staff. They are required to participate in an orientation to our program as well as a webinar orientation to our field given by EEC. All staff we select go through a criminal records background check which is completed by the EEC and DCF and fingerprints are checked with the FBI as part of this process according to BRC regulations. TAs and TRs are never alone with children unless they receive suitability status from EEC/DCF and/or are EEC certified teachers. Our highly experienced head teachers and teaching fellows directly supervise, visually observe, and formatively evaluate all the TAs and interns.

TAs help the teachers do many tasks in the classrooms and they have important relationships with the children. They work an average of 8 hours a week and during school breaks many work 25 to 35 hours a week with us. We minimize confusion by assigning each TA to one head teacher and one group of children. The TAs have very diverse backgrounds, often reflecting the diversity of our children. Most speak a second language in addition to English and many speak a third. We actively recruit men and TAs who represent minority populations. There are always a few whose family has lived or is currently living

outside the US. Our TAs are often planning on careers as scientists, physicians, lawyers, executives, social scientists as well as teachers. Many are accomplished musicians, craftspeople, and artists. All enjoy young children and provide positive experiences for them.

Usually prior to starting, TAs are provided with a tour, orientation, and information about the center and its approaches for working with children. Once hired for a set schedule and assigned to a team, TAs attend seminars, daily planning meetings, evening workshops, and receive on-the-job supervision by an EEC qualified teacher. They are encouraged to question our methods, suggest ideas, and speak openly with the Executive Director and head teachers. Many TAs remain with our program for several years. Often this provides them with extensive experience with young children. The children frequently develop very important relationships with these assistant teachers.

TAs with extensive experience in our program and two courses in early childhood education may be given extra responsibility in our program to help with planning activities. These TAs, once certified by EEC as teachers, help our head teachers by planning daily activities and leading groups of children. They may also assist the teaching fellows in covering for an absent head teacher.

PROTOCOLS FOR KEEPING TRACK OF CHILDREN

It is essential that we know where each child is supervised at all times during the day and that each child is with an educator. Each classroom keeps a daily attendance with the time of arrival and departure of each child. Additionally, we have forms for recording when a child leaves the classroom with anyone authorized to care for the child. You may be asked to mark this on one of these forms, by a teacher. All the classrooms and the playgrounds have lists of children currently in that space and the name of the teacher/classroom responsible for that child's welfare. It is imperative that all children in the group are identified by name and with a "group count" throughout the day, especially when moving from space to space.

HOW OUR PROGRAM CONTRIBUTES TO EACH CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

Our program is broad and flexible enough to accommodate very young children, as well as 4, 5 and 6-year-olds. We encourage all aspects of each child's development - social, emotional, linguistic, mathematical, reasoning, creative and physical. We support complex social interactions, community building, creativity, and play.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

Children have different cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Their families celebrate different holidays or even the same ones in different ways. Our curriculum is structured from the beginning of September through the end of June to include discussions of family, race, ethnic origin, family beliefs, seasonal changes, and holidays. We are non-sectarian and anticipate presentations from the point of view of the child, on each family's country of origin, ethnic customs, regional traditions, and lifestyles. We particularly encourage parental participation in these holiday celebrations and multi-cultural presentations.

The children help establish rules and codes of conduct. It is common to hear one child reminding another to keep the sand in the sandbox or to hear a child say, "Can I have a turn in five minutes?". The children help with the daily routines of preparing snack, cleaning different areas of the classrooms, and taking care of their own personal items (such as: lunch box, coat, and shoes). We value each child, and work to help each child respect others, broaden empathy, and build healthy relations with others. Children learn that their cooperation is important and necessary for our program to function smoothly. The staff use positive approaches when setting limits and encourage children to speak to others positively too. We assist children in friendship making skills and in the skills necessary for group participation (e.g., waiting for your turn, listening to others, sharing one's ideas).

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By being sensitive to the child's feelings, we help her/him express themselves in appropriate ways and develop empathy and their sense of self. Through individual discussions with teachers and in large or small groups, children share their beliefs about important issues in their lives (e.g., use of equipment at school, feelings about a friend, having only one parent, death, fears of monsters, and what it is to be a brother or sister). These topics come up in stories that are read, films we might see, or in events that occur. It is very important that parents and head teachers speak regularly with each other about a child's emotional wellbeing. Our program strives to have each child feel important, attached, and positive about himself/herself in relationships.

LINGUISTIC, MATHEMATICAL, COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Children enjoy learning when the concepts, challenges, and activities presented are developmentally appropriate and fun. Our educational program makes use of a wide range of materials to assist children in noticing patterns and identifying symbols necessary in math and reading. Children dictate or write stories, act out plays, and learn to appreciate the organization of the natural world. Children enjoy working with paints, clay, water and building toys. We have blocks to discuss concepts of number and organization; we encourage the exploration of ideas, points of view, and hypotheses. We support skill building for creative expression, for sharing ideas, and for explaining and ordering the world.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

In our outside playground, children are able to run, jump, climb, ride tricycles, swing, play ball games, and dig in the sand. We have access to a large garden area next to our playground, which we use for planting flowers and vegetables and composting. Children enjoy eating the veggies we grow for snack time. When inside, children dance and participate in varied movement activities and exercises to strengthen their bodies and sense of balance. Children are provided opportunities to draw and to build with small blocks and Lego. We often engage in creative drama, lots of dramatic play, as well as yoga and the use of gymnastics equipment. We dance and sing every day. Physical competency is essential for positive self-esteem, friendship-making and the effective communication of our work, ideas, and values.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

ADULT TO CHILD RATIO

We maintain a 1:3.5 ratio in the Butterflies classroom and a 1:4 in the Hummingbirds, Explorers, and Adventurers classrooms. We maintain a 1:5 ratio in the Navigator and Voyager classrooms. The state licensing requirements are 1:4.5 for toddlers and 1:10 for children over 2 years and 9 months. We prefer to have a 1:3 ratio in all groups and with the number of teaching assistants from the college we achieve this nearly every day. Our Explorers and Adventurer Group (children under 2 years 9 months) are always supervised by sight and sound as required by EEC and NAEYC accreditation standard 3.C.02. Preschoolers (over 2 years 9 months) Navigators and Voyagers will, on occasion, have children be out of visual range but not out of hearing range for no more than 3 to 5 minutes— such as going to the toilet without an adult (NAEYC standard 3.C.04).

THE LEMBERG DISCIPLINE POLICY (CMR 606 EEC 7.05)

It is the policy of the Lemberg Children's Center that all children will be treated with respect and personal dignity. The adults are responsible for the health, safety, and well-being of the children in their care. All adults should guide children toward behaviors that foster cooperation, respect, understanding of others and each person's right to personal safety and dignity.

Children will be told what is expected of their behavior in a positive way (e.g. we say: *"We walk in the classroom and you can run outside."*). We believe that children respond well to encouragement and poorly to punishment. It is for this reason that we acknowledge the correct things a child does and remind them of these appropriate behaviors when their behavior is inappropriate.

Our teaching staff use group times, small group times, and individual interactions to help children learn about resolving conflicts and practice appropriate behaviors. Our head teachers view age-appropriate self-control and group social skills as lessons that children will learn and skills that they will develop with time, practice, and adult support. Under the guidance of head teachers, our teachers and TAs work to help children develop skills in sharing friends and sharing things, and dealing with conflicts whether the issues involve race, gender bias, physical disabilities, turn-taking or hurt feelings. We expect children to have difficulties while learning. Our job is to help children find appropriate ways to negotiate and resolve conflicts.

All staff members are given in-service training and supervision on the management of difficult behaviors. The staff is required to read materials on the methods used by the program for encouraging positive social relationships. The Executive Director will ensure that each staff member is routinely evaluated for her/his strategies in guiding children toward positive behaviors. Staff development funds are available to expand the skills of head teachers in implementing this policy. At least three workshops per year will be provided by the center for TAs and trainees. The staff psychologist will be available to any head teacher requesting support to maintain the program's discipline policy.

In accordance with [606 CMR: Department of Early Education and Care \(EEC\) 7.05 \(8\)](#) and in accordance with standard early childhood practices outlined in the National Association for the Education of Young Children's "Center Accreditation Procedures", no child shall be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation, verbal abuse, neglect, physical punishment, excessive time-out, or confining children to a piece of equipment. No child shall be punished for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet. This is abusive behavior toward children and will be considered grounds for dismissal (as are all the forms of abuse or neglect cited in 7.05 (8)).

We emphasize to all our teachers and TAs that it is imperative that adults never raise their voices with the children.

COMMON SENSE TIPS AND STRATEGIES

We have a few discipline and behavior management approaches that we expect our teaching assistants to use when they are working with children. The style is currently best described as the "Responsive Teacher" model. We find that many of our suggestions can work well with varied teaching roles and parenting styles and are also effective with different child personalities or behavioral styles.

A FEW STRATEGIES TO GET STARTED

Forming a positive, trusting, and collaborative relationship with a child makes setting limits and teaching right from wrong much easier. Child development and brain development research consistently concludes that stress impedes learning and that severe prolonged stress can negatively alter brain architecture and functioning. We know that children learn more easily, do better in school and live healthier lives when learning is enjoyed in a supportive environment and in a community that works to keep stressors to a minimum. Additionally, there is extensive research concluding that children do much better in school and life when they live with adults who give them time, attention, and responsibility. Each child needs an adult to help interpret their experiences. Having a toy ripped away, watching a violent TV show, or witnessing an adult verbally belittling a friend is much less stressful on a child's emotional experience when a trusted adult is there to acknowledge the experience.

There are many successful strategies and styles for establishing a relationship in which a child wants to be with you and learn from you. One effective suggestion for gaining trust and respect is for the adult to engage in the child's play and encourage conversation. We find that bringing your body to the child's level helps reduce the feeling for the child that he is talking to a giant. You might sit on a child-sized chair or get on the ground. Do not sit back. Join in the play without taking over; do not be an entertainer in this situation, just do the activity with them. We want our teachers to watch the child and learn about what he/she likes and find what the child can do. Focusing on what a child can do is a positive approach. Looking for the positive things a child does helps you comment on the strengths the child has and leads you to look for more strengths. It helps you avoid taking over and doing things for the child, as your work is to learn more about what s/he can do. For any person, feeling respected for our skills and the work we do is a positive motivator to do more. We want children to do as much for themselves as possible and to have a desire to gain greater mastery, so doing things for them must be tempered with an awareness of the child's developmental abilities and age-appropriate expectations. These skills come from the experience gained from observing, listening, and interacting.

Engaging in the child's play and having a conversation with a child is not always easy. For some people it is a comfortable thing to do, but not for everyone. It takes learning some techniques which you can observe by watching our teachers. We also have many articles to read and experiences to share about effectively communicating with toddlers and young children. One tip is to avoid asking lots of questions. Questions can feel like a challenge or a test, and children may act out or walk away to avoid the pressure. Instead, start by sharing some information about yourself, let the child ask you questions and maybe share more information about yourself before responding to their questions with a question.

Conversing with children builds more than trust and friendship. Teachers of reading and writing tell us that conversation is the best way to expand the child's vocabulary, sentence structure and articulation. Conversations help a child grow in his/her ability to organize thoughts and ultimately to communicate in a richer way through language. Learning to read for the ideas and to write for communication of a point is more easily gained when the young child is encouraged to tell it in richer and richer language. Writing comes much easier when a child learns to tell a story with an introduction followed by an action-packed middle that leads to a conclusion with a point. Your thinking about this when conversing and telling stories shows a child how to do it. Children who are interested in you will learn what you do. You undoubtedly have experienced that children learn to be like you more through watching your behaviors than from listening to your words.

Another tip is to offer choices of appropriate things to be doing. Sometimes this can be done very playfully. Choices empower a child to feel in control and to take more responsibility for the choice made. By acknowledging the child's attempt at one of their choices we support the development of new habits. Talking about 'what to do' is a more useful guidance technique than just saying what not to do! Choices convey a message that something can be done this way, that way or another way. By suggesting possible alternatives, we are helping a child find appropriate replacements for inappropriate behaviors. If you must tell a child she is doing something wrong, remember that the inappropriate behavior is likely something that they have learned, a habit that needs to be corrected, and at Lemberg we believe that children can and will learn appropriate behaviors, and that we assist this learning by putting emphasis on the appropriate ways and things to do. Offering choices helps a child choose a new pathway, one that makes a commitment to try. A commitment to a different way is a better motivation for practicing something new.

Our work is to support the more effective behaviors and to help a child practice them. Sometimes this is effectively done when we call attention to how friends are using these more effective behaviors. Reading a story or creating a puppet play is also very effective for children to see alternative ways to solve a problem or disputes. These methods give the child more sensory information and more visual cues than verbal ones.

We prefer teachers to minimize saying "DON'T" and "NO" by saying "You can do this (X) or that (Y)" or "We can do that later and now we are doing this." Please remember, if you say you will do something later, follow through on that commitment. Children have excellent memories. If you can't follow through, ask one of us to do so for you.

WORDS THAT WORK "LEMBERG SPEAK"

APPROPRIATE VOCABULARY FOR GUIDANCE OF YOUNG CHILDREN

1. **Eliminate** from your vocabulary the phrase, "Do you want to __X__?".

When you do not want the child to say "no", it is far better to say, "It is time to __X__." The child may still say "no", but at least you would not have given him the impression he had "no" as a choice!

2. **Minimize** your use of "no" and "don't".

Young children learn much of their language through imitation. If they constantly hear, "no" and "don't", they may frequently say "no" and "I won't".

3. **Use** positive phrasing when speaking with children:

CLEAN UP TIME:

- "Clean up time in two minutes."
- "Clean up time as soon as we finish here."
- "Here's something for you to carry."
- "Your arms are strong enough for this."
- "Let's park the tricycle over there."
- "We can load the toys on the wagon."
- "Let's carry this together."
- "I'll be back in a minute to help you load the toys."
- Offer Choice:
 - "Will you carry the blocks or pull the wagon?"
 - "Shall we carry it or pull it in the wagon?"

TIME TO COME INDOORS:

- "It will soon be time to come in."
- "As soon as you have __X__ it will be time to come in."
- "We need to come indoors now."
 - "Let's carry your doll / blocks / toys indoors."
 - "When we get inside there is something for us to do."
 - "I need you to help me now."
 - "As soon as we stack the blocks here, we are ready to go in."
 - Offer Choice:
 - "Shall we empty your shoes of sand here or by the steps?"
 - "Shall we park the tricycle by the steps or put it away?"

TRY THESE IDEAS AND THE ONES BELOW WITH THE CHILDREN YOU ARE WORKING WITH
WHILE YOU ARE HERE.

AT LEMBERG WE DO ...

- Speak in a calm, kind voice.
- Speak directly to a child; do not call to him across the playroom.
- Get down to a child's physical level if possible. That is, stoop down or sit on a low chair so that they can see your face.
- Speak in short, meaningful sentences that a child can understand.
- Try to express your requests in a positive way. This will help a child to learn a better or more acceptable way of doing things.
- Answer a child's questions, but do not monopolize or dominate conversations. One of our goals is that children learn to interact with, talk with, and enjoy play with their peers.
- Keep your voice and facial expression pleasant.

AT LEMBERG WE DO NOT ...

- Make fun of the child.
- Give a child a choice if he cannot have one.
- Compare the child with another by saying, "*See how clean Jim's hands are*". (This might make him dislike both Jim and you).
- Be dishonest with the child. Do not say "*Jerry didn't mean to hurt you*". (He may be aware that Jerry did intend to hurt him).
 - Instead, say, "*Jerry didn't know how much it would hurt*", or "*Do you think Jerry could tell you what he wanted without hurting you?*".
- Make a child feel guilty by saying something like, "*Only bad boys do things like that*". (Accept the child, even though you do not condone his actions.)
- Make a child feel inferior by saying; "*You're a big boy now. You shouldn't act like a baby*".

"GOOD" OR "BIG" AND OTHER WORDS OF PRAISE

Most guides about being positive and encouraging suggest praising the child. We have learned that there can be negative consequences to frequent praise or praise not earned. "*You used the toilet like a big girl*" has the potential when a child has an accident to mean you are not "big". Saying "good job" after everything a child does quickly becomes hollow. It is easy to overuse "big" and "good" and not really acknowledge what the child has done or how a child thinks about what s/he has just done. When you say "*I am pleased*" and "*I am not pleased*" keep in mind that we want children motivated to do things because they enjoy it, just as much, if not more than because it will earn them stars from us.

When you praise children, be specific. Another way to express "Good job!" or "That's great!" is to say: "*You're working so hard on that*", or "*I really like the yellow in your painting*", or "*I see you made lines that went up and down and around in a circle.*" Be as descriptive as possible. Taking the time to see

what is done and describing it more specifically really tells much more about what you find interesting. It makes room for the child to tell you more about what she was trying to accomplish. Just look at the following examples. Compare how you would feel to be on the receiving end of these comments:

<i>"You're a good girl."</i>	OR	<i>"You just shared your blocks with John, and it looks like he enjoys playing with you."</i>
<i>"Wow! I'm so proud of you!"</i>	OR	<i>"You just put that together without any help. You must be very proud of yourself."</i>

ABOUT "I'M SORRY"

We do not force children to say that they are sorry to another child. One reason is that all too often saying "I am sorry" does not address what the child really feels. Saying sorry should be something the child actually means. It should not be a shortcut to getting rid of the adult intervention or getting away with whatever was just done inappropriately. When an injury from an accident occurs, we ask the child to help care for their injured friend. When the injury occurs as a result of a genuine desire to protect oneself or harm another, we work with the child on finding ways to resolve disputes with words. It may also be appropriate to have the child who is not injured to help out. In some circumstances isolating the child who has hurt another is a more appropriate way to help the child manage her anger. Following up with her after she has calmed down can happen soon after; if she is more calm, she may be more open to hearing suggestions about how a situation she chose to resolve with violence can be handled differently. Dispute resolution is an important process. Using violence is an impulsive, responsive behavior that is often learned before a child learns more effective, appropriate approaches. The use of "I'm sorry" right after a child hits another rarely accomplishes our goals. Rarely does the establishment of the pattern of using these words teach empathy.

Instead, explain the consequences of the child's actions— *"When you hit Mary, it hurt her very much. Do you see how sad she looks?"*. Take the aggressor over to the victim and have him or her help you make sure the victim is okay (or apply ice, etc.). You can model appropriate behaviors by saying to the victim, *"I'm sorry that happened to you, Mary. Are you okay?"* Model empathy, but please do not force the child to apologize, as it may only make the aggressor feel more resentful.

If a child does something to another child (or you) and says, *"I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry..."* as a way out of getting reprimanded, you can say something like, *"Here you can use your words to say: 'Stop' or 'Can I try it' or 'When can I try it?'"*. We teach children to pause and take some breaths when they feel angry. When a child does hurt another, we often get the child involved in the caring and healing. We hope to model and to teach empathy and taking responsibility for our actions.

OFFERING ALTERNATIVE CHOICES AS CHILDREN LEARN TO SOLVE CONFLICTS

It takes time and practice for children to learn to solve conflicts with their peers. We want to minimize focusing on errors, and instead we patiently teach and model appropriate problem-solving

strategies. We often offer alternative choices. Choices provide guidance by suggesting a variety of possible ways to proceed. We guide children in appropriate behaviors by presenting a range of safe and appropriate choices for them and then encouraging one of these be chosen. Here is an example. At the art table two children start arguing, with one child trying to pull a blue marker away from the other. The adult can intervene with responses such as:

- *"Is there another blue marker?"*
- *"There is another blue marker in the box."*
- *"You can use a different color marker now. We trade if we can, or ask a teacher to help."*
- *"Is there some other way to get what you need without grabbing?"*
- *"Does anyone here at the table have a suggestion for how to take turns?"*

OFFERING CHOICES

Offering choices or making suggestions allows for participation in decision-making and empowers children to help solve problems. This is vital because we want children to learn to look at problems and think about possible solutions. When teachers calmly think about and offer choices, we model self-control and appropriate problem-solving strategies, we teach socially acceptable behaviors, and we act on our beliefs that non-violent choices exist, and people can solve problems peacefully. We show children that creative thinking often leads us to discovering there are several ways to approach or deal with a problematic situation.

Of course, there are some times or situations when choices may be very limited, times when we must essentially do what needs to be done. However, there are attitudes and frames of mind that can make a difference when we encounter such situations. When it's time to wash up for lunch, we must wash up, but it may be possible to pretend to be a frog at the sink or to sing a song while washing; we could pretend to be a snake or horse on the way to the sink. When we must wait in line, why not play word games with another person who is also waiting?

Thinking creatively about solutions and offering choices supports and broadens a child's problem-solving and decision-making abilities. Even when choices are limited or we must transition, try to find ways to make these moments interesting and fun.

HELPING CHILDREN UNDERSTAND PERSONAL SPACE

We want to encourage children to practice the words, sentences, or signs that will communicate their message to another child without angering or frightening others. Grabbing is a personal space violation. We see this easily when a child grabs something from another. We are all sensitive to violations of personal space. If I walk up to you and grab your wrist to look at your watch, you are likely to pull your hand away. However, if I walk up to you and say: *"What a nice watch. May I see it?"* you are more likely to offer your wrist for me to see your watch. In both situations all I want to do is see your watch. However, in the second scenario I chose a way to do it that did not violate your personal space. This is one of the skills we want to teach. Learning this skill makes a great deal of difference in the way children interact with each other. We teach children how to say: *"Stop"* or *"Don't"*. We want our children to gain the confidence to say what can or cannot be done to them.

Children need to be taught how to ask for something that another is using, and they need to practice this skill a lot. We can practice the skill at a group time with all the children learning together. Using storybooks, felt board characters or puppets provide a framework for acting out situations and demonstrating several ways to approach turn taking and the consequences of failing to do so. We might have puppets say: *“Can I use that in two minutes (or when you are done)?”*. Or the puppet who has a toy might say: *“I’ll give it to you when I’m done”*. When back on the playground children can use strategies that the puppets used, such as negotiating the number of minutes that each will ride the “best” tricycle. Adults can help children in such a situation by being nearby to support the ‘negotiation’, remind them what the puppets did, and by taking responsibility for letting the children know when the agreed upon time has passed. Turn-taking and other social-emotional skills are acquired developmentally. In fact it is not so different from when children develop the ability to physically balance their bodies: first to balance on two feet, then later one foot, then later perhaps to balance on their toes or the toes of one foot. Learning appropriate ways to ask for something, to negotiate a resolution, to wait for a turn – these are skills that adults at Lemberg help children to learn by providing guidance and opportunities for practice.

HELPING CHILDREN ENTER PLAY WITH OTHERS

We teach children how to enter play with others in appropriate ways. Learning to enter another’s play or to allow others to join your play are skills that take time to develop, require practice, and often need teaching. When a child wants to join another’s play, e.g. by asking *“Can I play with you?”* an adult may support the situation by giving the entering child a toy or something to share with the other child. A more socially developed child could be supported by an adult’s suggestion, such as *“What toys do you want to bring ...?”*. At Lemberg, adults think about and help to ensure that when a child joins play, he will not be threatening the children already playing. If someone (either a child or an adult) thinks that you are going to take what they have or ruin what they have been working on, then you should expect them to resist your entry. Sometimes, a child only wants to sit alongside and engage in similar play, rather than cooperatively ‘join’ another’s play. In these cases, an adult should hold aside additional materials for a new child to join in the activity.

We also know that entering play with people you do not know or in places you have never been is more threatening. You do not know the rules or expectations. Most of us are cautious in these situations. Entering successfully into new situations requires confidence and is a skill that takes a long time to develop for most of us. We encourage children to enter such situations with a companion (i.e., parent, friend, teacher, or peer). We find that when Brandeis students come to inquire about a job, here they often use this strategy; they come with a friend or several friends. Similarly, for one of our young children to start to play in new situations it is helpful for the adult to facilitate the play with the other children at first and then step out of the play once the child is engaged.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH CHILDREN AT LEMBERG, PLEASE SEE MATERIALS IN THE APPENDIX

POLICY ON TOYS BROUGHT FROM HOME

LOVEYS: Many children have “loveys” such as a special security blanket, doll, or stuffed animal. We welcome them here. Unlike other toys brought from home, we do not request that children share these very special items.

OTHER TOYS: Restrictions have been placed on the amount and the type of other toys, games, or books that a child may bring from home. This is in consideration of fair mindedness, each child’s safety, our ability to assist in finding the toys, and to help prevent damage to items brought from home. Our policy is very simple:

1. Only ONE ITEM PER DAY may be brought from home.
2. The child's name is clearly LABELED on the toy to avoid misunderstandings between children.
3. Toys encouraging violence, such as guns and action figures or those with war-parts are not brought to the center.
4. Barbie dolls are not allowed because we feel they show sexual stereotypes that are inappropriate.
5. **Toys from home are to be shared with anyone who wishes to play with them. If it is not possible to share a particular toy, then turns will be taken. If a child does not wish to allow a toy to be used communally, the child may return it to her/his cubby for safe keeping.**
6. Teachers cannot take responsibility for damage to a toy, game, or book from home, unless the staff person particularly requests that a child bring in that particular item.

CHILD INFORMATION

PERSONAL CARE TOILETING & DIAPERING

TOILET TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Children are NOT REQUIRED to be toilet trained for any group. We feel that each child is ready at a different time. When a child feels confident enough to be responsible for toilet training, the child will do it. We have potty-chairs, child-sized toilets, and low sinks for hand washing. In addition, we have discussions with the children about their toileting to help them become responsible for training themselves. [Note: Parents of children who are not trained share in the cost of disposable diapers, gloves and wipes used at the center and are billed for this separately from their tuition.]

TOILETING PROCEDURES

It is the policy of the center (and its teachers) to encourage each child to be responsible for his appropriate use of the toilet. If a child is not ready to use a toilet, the staff changes disposable diapers. Should a child need special assistance to use the toilet (e.g., assistance getting onto the toilet, reminders

to go, or other help) the teachers will provide it, as appropriate and in accordance with professional standards and preparation. Toileting is not an appropriate place for power struggles between adults and children.

The toilet area is cleaned at least four times during the day or as necessary. The area is monitored for safety when children are using it. At least four times during the day, children are reminded to use the toilet and to wash thoroughly before and after use. Hand washing and proper care of the toilet area requires following sanitary and other health and safety procedures. We use disposable paper toweling and liquid soap for hand washing. Disinfectant is used to sanitize toilets, sinks, faucets, trash containers, door handles and walls. These sanitary procedures help lessen exposure to many diseases, while making sure that the toilets and sinks are pleasant to use. Routine use of the toilet and sink area occurs at around 10:00, 12:00, 2:00, 3:30 and 5:15. These times coincide with the periods before morning snack, before and after lunch, after waking from nap and before afternoon snack.

DIAPERING POLICY

Diaper changing time is important and should be a special time for a child and the adults changing them. It is a good time to talk about the child's activities and interests and to play lovingly. Staff is required to follow the Department of Public Health "The Stop Disease Method of Changing Diapers" which is posted at the diaper changing table. Basic care requires following sanitary and other health and safety procedures, which minimizes one's exposure to illness and child discomfort from irritation, while maximizing everyone's well-being.

The center uses disposable diapers, and wipes or paper towels with soap and water to wash a child. Adults are required to wear gloves and wash after each diaper change. Children are changed every two hours or as needed throughout the day. Routine checking of disposable diapers occurs at around 10:00, 12:00, 2:00, 3:30 and 5:15.

DAILY ROUTINES BY CLASSROOM

EXPLORERS AND ADVENTURERS DAILY ROUTINE (TODDLER SCHEDULE)

8:00-9:30	Arrivals, Free Choice Play from Teacher Selected Materials
9:00-9:30	Snack available (children may help prepare by setting table, scooping yogurt, etc.)
9:30-9:40	Clean-up and Greeting Circle (5-10 minutes to say hello)
9:40-10:00	Diapering and toileting during Free Choice Play from Teacher Selected Materials
10:00-10:15	Large Group Experience (songs, movement, finger plays, story time, Peaceful Touch, hands-on thematic activity)
10:15-10:35	Small Group Activities – Planned projects (art, manipulative, sensory, science, etc.)

10:35-11:30	Outside Time (gross motor time if weather keeps us inside)
11:30-12:00	Handwashing and Lunch
12:00-12:30	Diapering, Toileting, Books and Stories (quiet time, laps)
12:30-2:30	Lights out, Nap Time
2:30-3:30	Gentle wakeups, Diapering/Toileting, Snack available
3:30-4:15	Outside Time
4:15-4:45	Large Group Experience and Planned Small Group Activities
4:45-5:00	Diapering and Toileting during Free Choice Play from Teacher Selected Materials
5:00-5:45	Free Choice Play from Teacher Selected Materials, Goodbyes
5:30-5:45	Clean-up Time

These times are subject to change based on individual and group needs.

Teachers adjust the schedule to balance time alone and together; active and quiet play; fresh air and cozy times.

NAVIGATORS DAILY ROUTINE

8:00-9:05	Free Choice Play from Teacher Selected Materials
9:05-9:10	Clean up, sit, wash hands for snack
9:10-9:30	Snack
9:30-10:00	Free Choice Play from Teacher Selected Materials in classroom
*9:40	Bathroom Time during Free Choice Play from Teacher Selected Materials
10:00-10:20	Group Time
10:20/10:30	Activities
11:00-11:30	Outside Time
11:30-12:00	Lunch
12:00-12:25	Books / Bathroom Time
12:25-2:00	Nap Time

2:00-2:30	Start Wake-Up / Bathroom Time
2:30-2:45	Snack
2:45-3:45	Outside Time
3:45-4:15	Group Time
4:15/4:20-4:45	Activities inside
4:45-5:00	Bathroom
5:00-5:30	Free Choice Play from Teacher Selected Materials in classroom
5:30-5:45	Clean-up and Book Time
5:45	Center closes

VOYAGERS DAILY ROUTINE

8:00	Center opens for children
8:00-9:20	Free Choice of Activities from Teacher Selected Materials – inside
9:20-9:30	Clean-up for snack (includes toileting and washing up)
9:30-9:50	Snack
9:50-10:15	Large Group Time
10:15-11:00	Small Group Activities – Planned projects
11:00-11:30	Independent activities /walks/ movement
11:30-12:00	Outdoor Play
12:00-12:45	Lunch (includes toileting and washing up)
12:45-1:00	Book Time
1:00-2:00	Rest / nap time / story tapes
2:00-3:30	Outdoor Play or Free Choice of Activities
3:30-4:00	Snack (includes toileting and washing up)
4:00-4:30	Large Group Time

- 4:30-5:00 Small Group Activities – Planned projects
- 5:00-5:45 Small Groups / Free Choice of Activities / Clean-up (includes toileting and wash up)
- 5:45 Closing

APPENDICES

Talk Time: An Article by Ruth Selman

Tools for Building Positive Identities and a Respect for Differences: Excerpts and Adaptations from Gonzalez-Mena & Pulido-Tobiassen

Talking with Children

Extending Activities & Discussion with Children: Excerpts from Weitzman & Greenberg

The items displayed in the Appendix are examples of the type of educational materials used at the Lemberg Children's Center for staff orientation and professional development.

TALK TIME: AN ARTICLE BY RUTH SELMAN

Ruth Selman presents information about talking with children, not only toddlers. We want all staff to speak frequently with young children. The article is a good guide on how to ask questions, how to listen to the answers and how to encourage development of language, creativity, and socially responsible behavior.

Selman, R. (2001). Talk Time: Programming Communicative Interaction into the Toddler Day. *Young Children*, 56(3), 15-18.

YOUNG CHILDREN LEARN THROUGH CREATIVE SELF-EXPRESSION

Talk Time:

Programming Communicative Interaction into the Toddler Day

Ruth Selman

It is 10:30 A.M. at the Toddler Center and the two-year-olds are seated around a snack table, hungrily munching on their apples and crackers. After a few moments Rick, their teacher, casually announces, "Let's have talk time." He waits to make sure everyone is finished eating and then continues, "Yesterday it was Michael's turn to start. Today it is Jean's turn. What would you like to talk about, Jean?"

Jean's dark eyes light up. "Mommy," she declares. "Talk about Mommy."

"Your mommy?" Rick asks. Jean nods her head yes.

Jean: Mommy work.

Rick: Yes, your mommy works. She works, doesn't she? She works at home taking care of you, and she also works in another place, right? [*Rick deliberately repeats the word works, the third-person singular verb form that Jean has not yet mastered.*]

Jean: Daddy too! [*Is it a sign of the times that working daddies are an afterthought?*]

Ruth Corey Selman, Ph.D., recently retired after 20 years as teacher and codirector of the New York Village Infant Center. She is a columnist for *Montessori Life* magazine, an education consultant, and the nongovernmental representative to the United Nations for the American Montessori Society, which is honoring her with the Living Legacy Award for 2001 for her work as a peace educator.

Young Children • May 2001

An instant chorus fills the room: "My mommy too." "My daddy too." Rick holds up two fingers, the signal for quiet, and the chorus subsides.

Rick: Remember, only one person speaks at a time. Now it's Celia's turn. We must wait until Celia finishes before someone else talks, okay? Did you say your mommy works too, Celia?

Celia: Yep. Hopital.

Rick: Your mommy works at the hospital?

Celia: Yep.

Rick: What does your mommy do there?

Celia: Works. Mommy make everybody better. And Zelda go to the big school and Sunday I go my Daddy's house and . . .

Celia's parents claim she has been talking since birth. She easily dominates a conversation unless the brakes are applied. But for this crowd she serves as a model. They are all ears as Celia rattles on about her family, her dog, her friend Rita, her new shoes, and all the things that are important in her life.

When Celia has nothing more to add, Rick moves on, giving each child a turn to speak. Everyone participates except Benjamin, whose voice we have not heard except for an occasional utterance while in the sandbox ("Mine! That mine!"). Benjamin's silence is not significant at his age. The children are at dif-

ferent stages of expressive language development. Talk time is an opportunity for each to develop optimally at his or her own pace.

Promoting communicative interaction

It is axiomatic that children must be exposed to language before they will speak. Generally they receive this exposure during the course of daily life at home and at the Toddler Center. But talking is not just speaking. Talking involves communication—speaking *with* and *to* someone, getting feedback, and composing language in response to that feedback. Talking with someone implies a continuous exchange—a dialogue. The term *communicative interaction* describes this type of language exchange.

Because toddlers have only beginning skills in expressive language, adults often resort to one-sided conversations. It takes a special effort to create the kind of exchange that passes the test for

Talking is not just speaking. Talking involves communication—speaking *with* and *to* someone, getting feedback, and composing language in response to that feedback.

communicative interaction. For example, when Jean said, "Talk about Mommy" (meaning, I want to talk about my mommy), Rick followed with, "Your mommy works, doesn't she?" When Jean added the comment, "Daddy too," the dialogue passed the interaction test: Communicator 1 (Jean) to Communicator 2 (Rick) and back to Communicator 1 (Jean). However, if Rick had simply said, "Your Mommy is a doctor," without giving Jean a hook to

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lead her to make another comment, that conversation would not have met the criteria for interaction because it would have been a simple message from Communicator 1 to Communicator 2.

Everyday exchanges between adults and young children demonstrate the mechanics of communicative interaction. For instance,

When parents have little conversations with their babies, talking to them and giving them a chance to coo or babble back, those babies are already learning to take turns. And kids who know how to take turns are better listeners. (Gerylo 1998, 128-29)

Listening and taking turns are exactly the goals we wish to reach during talk time.



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What is talk time?

Opportunities for naturally occurring communicative interaction are limited and scattered in a half-day nursery program. To achieve the goal of facilitating toddlers' language development, we invented talk time—a formal venue for consciously practicing communicative interaction. Through talk time we also follow the children's language progress by taping and taking notes on our conversations.

The talk time techniques are especially useful in identifying and helping delayed talkers, the so-called silent children. Although many speech therapists think young toddlers with delayed expressive language should be referred for therapy, we have opted to give *all* our children opportunities for

greater immersion in language. We know that environment may play a role and that some children do not speak because nobody speaks to them (Kalb & Namuth 1997). If a child (most often a boy) continues a one- or two-word pattern of speaking well beyond age two-and-a-half and does not start to speak in sentences, we do not hesitate to discuss with the parents further steps to take.

Our talk time program has three governing rules:

- Only one person at a time may speak.
- Everyone gets a turn to choose a subject.
- We don't leave the talk time table until everyone has had a turn and the activity is officially over.

Because we typically pair food with conversation, we hold our daily talk time during the children's 15- to 20-minute scheduled snack. We've found that this not only sets a relaxed tone for conversing, but it also is the only time two-year-olds sit still for 15 minutes.

Young children's language acquisition

When we introduced talk time at the beginning of the year, chatty Celia, who had just turned two, was the only child able to pick up the teacher's cues. The others, ranging in age from 20 to 28 months, were mainly at the stage of limited word utterances such as "I not sad," "This not ice cream," "He bite me." In addition, their contributions were not always relevant to the teacher's questions. For a while the teacher found it necessary to do most of the talking. But each month—if not each week—there were additional participants, and by spring talk time was beginning to sound like cultured conversation.

Language absorption during the period from 18 months to three years of age is at its peak. Toddlers swallow the language whole. They cannot get enough of it. And they respond to structure that keeps them in the dialogue.

Language acquisition goes beyond imitation, beyond merely hearing the spoken word. Moskowitz (1978) cites the case of a boy with normal hearing born to deaf

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parents who communicated through American Sign Language (ASL). His parents exposed him to television every day so that he would hear and learn English. However, because the boy was asthmatic and largely confined to home, he interacted only with family and friends who used ASL. By the age of three he was fluent in signing, but he spoke no English and his English comprehension was limited. Clearly the element of exchange was missing between the boy and his daily English-language bombardment from TV.

The young child who communicates freely is a delight to all. At our center we monitor the children's language acquisition with excitement, like doting parents celebrating each new word, each refinement of skills, every bright saying. Most rewarding is to hear the content of the children's talk keep pace with their developing articulation. By the time they turn three, we note the precocious courtesy and respect with which they conduct themselves at talk time: listening and participating for longer periods, waiting for others to finish, taking turns cooperatively, understanding cues, and responding eagerly to questions.

Talk time themes and strategies

We have accumulated a number of stock themes from which the children choose to converse: Mommy; Going Shopping; Doing Things All By Myself (a favorite); and Nonsense Talk. Bonny, a staff member who is a former actress, is particularly good at conversing with children in nonsense talk (talk time has led to the discovery of much latent talent within our staff):

Bonny: Tanisha is eating purple crackers.

Tanisha [giggling]: Noooo!

Bonny: Oh yes. They're purple, aren't they?

Tanisha: No. They're just plain. They're cracker color.

Amy: Purple crackers. That's silly.

Jean: Lemme see . . . noooo.

Bonny: Purple crackers in my soup! Lupe a dupe in my soup! [chorus of giggles and laughter]

Celia [always eager for the last word]: My crackers are purple too and orange and pink and green, and I have a whole bunch of purple apples and purple purples!

Cazden (1972) found that children try to secure communicative interaction by asking why. "The question serves to keep the conversation going, which may be the child's real aim" (p. 86). We get lots of *why* questions at talk time, as the following conversation demonstrates:

Emily: Why he crying?

Teacher: He fell.

Emily: Why?

Teacher: Because he tripped.

Emily: Why he tripped?

Teacher: Because his shoelaces were untied.

Emily: Why?

Teacher: Because the moon is made of green cheese.

Emily [giggling]: Why?

Emily is clearly not just seeking information.

We try to keep the interaction fun. This takes some special planning—or at least special thinking. As the children's concentration and understanding grow, we find we can venture beyond stock themes into the realm of values. We can talk about friendship, sharing, helpfulness, and cooperation, using just those words and relating the language to their own behavior, always remembering to allow opportunities for communicative interaction:

Teacher: Emily was so generous today at snack time. Do you remember what she did, Allison?

Allison: She shared all the cookies.

Emily: That was from my birthday. Mommy said share them.

Teacher: Well, thank you, Emily. And who else did something special today?

Greg: Me. Sweeped up the sand.

Celia: Me too. I sweeped up the sand. Put it back in the sandbox.

Teacher: I saw you. You both swept up the sand. Greg swept and Celia swept. You were both very cooperative.

Feelings now have names and there is a way to talk about behaviors as well as attitudes.

A word of warning: Talk time must never be used as a forum for correcting children's grammar or pronunciation in a direct, judgmental way. A child's confidence in the use of language is at its greatest risk during these months, and it doesn't take much interference to reinforce developmental speech dysfunction. Intriguing constructions such as "Her didn't did it" often refine themselves within a few weeks of hearing and listening, with no need for direct intervention. "In an interactive meaning-oriented environment, the



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YOUNG CHILDREN LEARN THROUGH CREATIVE SELF-EXPRESSION

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active little language processor practices languaging, not like the juggler who rehearses for a future performance, but rather like the doctor or lawyer who 'practices' medicine or law by actively engaging in them" (Dale 1976).

Conclusion

Our observations suggest there is more to language acquisition than mere imitation. It is a wondrous process that has fascinated philosophers for centuries. And the

more we examine the process, the more astonishing it becomes. As Roger Brown wrote, "We realize even more than before the magnitude of the child's accomplishment. . . . Theories of development must succeed or fail on the basis of how well they explain this achievement" (1973, 66). Like every other life process, language unfolds, and we are privileged to be there as a help to life. Talk time is one way we try.

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TOOLS FOR BUILDING POSITIVE IDENTITIES AND A RESPECT FOR DIFFERENCES

[Here](#) is a useful article about addressing diversity, developing cultural sensitivity, and learning to appreciate differences -- Teaching Diversity: A Place to Begin (1999) by Janet Gonzalez-Mena & Dora Pulido-Tobiassen. We use this article for orientation and professional development with our staff. Below are adapted excerpts pulled from the work of Gonzalez-Mena & Pulido-Tobiassen.

1. Be available. Keep in mind that body language can reveal whether you are anxious or in a hurry and can help a child be open with you. If you are calm and relaxed, a child will feel more comfortable being open with you.
2. Be informative. Children look to adults for knowledge. Their conclusions stem from what they hear.
3. Be receptive. Help children feel comfortable talking to you by setting aside your judgments. Strive to listen beyond their words to uncover unspoken messages.
4. Figure out problems together. If a child is unhappy, try to get the root of the problem.
5. Do not assume. It is our responsibility to open up possibilities for children to talk to us about their opinions and reasons for how they choose to act.

Gonzalez-Mena, J. & Pulido-Tobiassen, D. (1999). A Place to Begin: Working with Parents on Issues of Diversity. *Early Childhood Today* (November).

TALKING WITH CHILDREN...

Additionally, Louise Marie Langford (1975) has developed a 'WE DO SAY' / 'WE DO NOT SAY' chart in her book *Guidance of The Young Child* that we use for orientation and professional development with our staff. Based on Langford's work, Lemberg staff have adapted the chart with some additions and alterations.

AT LEMBERG	
WE DO SAY...	WE DO NOT SAY...
Please...	
Sit down when you slide.	Don't stand up on the slide.
Dig in the sand.	Don't throw the sand.

Sit in the swing.	Don't stand on the swing.
Use both hands when you climb.	You'll fall if you don't watch out.
Climb down the ladder.	Don't jump off the climbing structure.
Let's put the stick in the trash.	Don't play with the stick. You might hurt someone.
Keep the puzzle on the table.	Don't dump the puzzle pieces on the floor.
Turn the pages carefully.	Don't tear the book.
Talk in a quiet voice.	Don't shout.
Wipe your hands on the paper towel.	Don't put your hands on anything.
Be sure the ladder is safe.	Be careful. You might fall.
Sit on your chair.	Don't rock on your chair.
Move back on your rug.	Don't lean forward; the other children can't see.
Walk safely around the swing.	Be careful. The swing might hit you.
Wipe your brush on the jar.	Don't drip paint on the floor.
Put an apron on.	Don't you want to put an apron?
Time to go inside.	Shall we go inside?
Wash your hands.	Don't you want to wash your hands?

Drink your milk.	Don't you want to drink your milk?
Drink out of your own glass.	Don't bother the other children.
Ride your tricycle around the bench.	Don't bump the bench.
Throw your ball over here.	Don't hit the window.
Leave the heavy blocks on the ground.	Don't put the heavy blocks on that high board.
Give me the stick to hold while you climb.	Don't climb with that stick in your hand.
Take a bite of your lunch now.	Don't play at the table.
Turn off the water now & dry your hands.	Don't spend any more time washing.
Take little bites, and then it will all go in your mouth.	Don't take such big bites and then you won't spill.

Langford, L. M. (1975). *Guidance of The Young Child* (2nd ed.). Wiley.

We find too that it is important to give children time to respond and time to try. Processing sensory input into understandable responses takes a little time; expect a delayed response to something that is new and challenging. When you speak with children remember to pause and leave time for children to think and to speak for themselves. Similarly, when a child is making something let her do it; take care not to take over so much that you find yourself doing the work with the child watching you. The goal is to support children in their learning. At Lemberg this is our most important job.

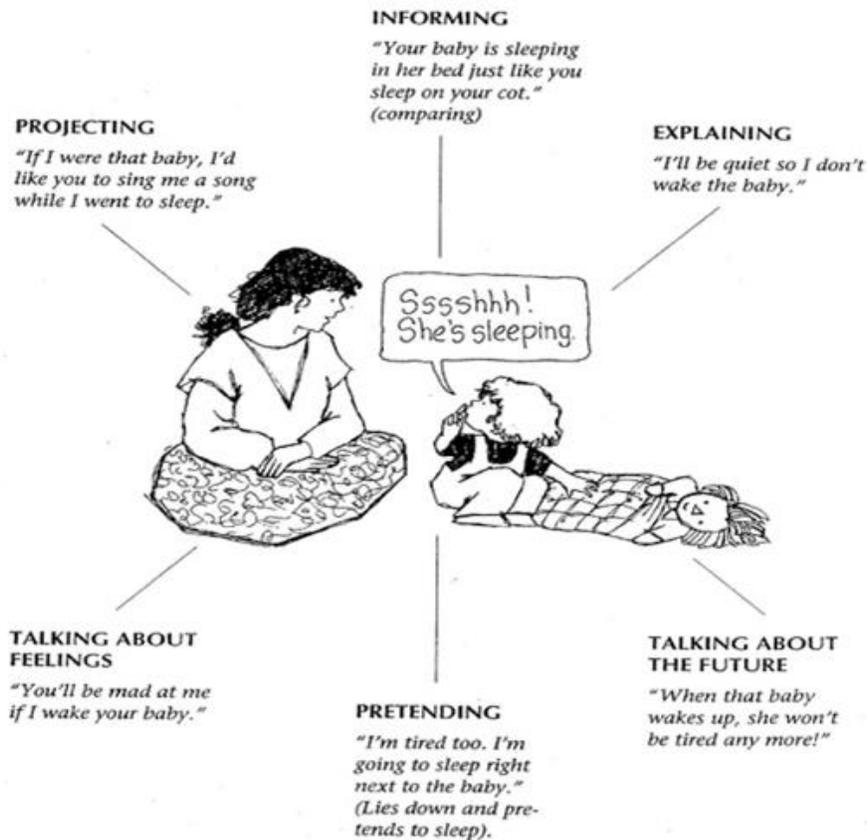
EXTENDING ACTIVITIES & DISCUSSION WITH CHILDREN

Below are excerpts from the work of Elaine Weitzman and Janice Greenberg. We use these excerpts for staff orientation and professional development with our staff.

These two pages share many ways that you can speak with children which will help you engage more deeply with them and extend their play by offering new information. *[These suggestions work pretty well with adults too :-)]*

Weitzman, E. & Greenberg, J. (2004). Learning Language & Loving it: A Guide to Promoting Children's Social, Language, & Literacy Development in Early Childhood Settings (2nd ed.). The Hanen Centre.

Respond to the child's "Sssshhh! She's sleeping" and extend the topic by:



Extending the Topic

When you are having a conversation with a child, you have a number of options for extending the topic:

<p>INFORM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give information about past or present • provide details • compare/contrast two things • relate present experience to past experience 	<p>PROJECT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • project into other people's lives, experiences • project into situations never experienced (What might it be like to....?)
<p>EXPLAIN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give reasons • explain outcomes • describe cause-effect relationships • draw conclusions • justify actions, opinions • recognize problem and provide solutions 	<p>TALK ABOUT THE FUTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • talk about what will happen • talk about what might happen • predict what will happen • anticipate possible problems and possible solutions • consider alternative ways of handling a situation
<p>TALK ABOUT FEELINGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • talk about how one feels • talk about opinions, impressions 	<p>PRETEND/IMAGINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • talk about imaginary things • play a pretend role • create an imaginary "story" (based on real life or fantasy)

Take the child's stage of language development into consideration when you extend the topic: the information you provide to children at Stage 5 will be less complex than the information you provide to those at Stages 6 and 7.