

# STRATEGIES TO ENGAGE CHILDREN IN CONVERSATIONS



## Step 1: Engage

- Get down on the child's physical level (by kneeling, for example).
- Listen to what the child says or pay attention to what they are doing or pointing at.
- Observe the child's facial or body expressions.

## Step 2: Encourage Conversations

- Comment on or describe what the child is doing and wait for a response.
  - “You like the trains. You're working hard to build a large train track.”
- Ask questions about what the child is doing or plans to do.
  - “What are your plans for those blocks?”

## Step 3: Extend Language and Learning

- Repeat what the child says then add a little bit more or a new vocabulary word.
  - Label or describe:
    - **Child:** I like it.
    - **Teacher:** You like juicy peaches
  - Provide more information:
    - **Child:** (pointing outside) Dark!
    - **Teacher:** The sky is dark. It looks like it may rain soon.
- Help make connections between what is happening in the classroom and what is happening in homes or communities.
  - “What does this remind you of?”
  - “You like playing with stuffed animals. Do you have any animals at home?”