



Suggestions for Talking with a Child

- Get down at the child's level and as close to his or her ears as possible.
- Maintain eye contact with the child throughout the conversation.
- Let your face and voice tell the child that what you are saying or doing is important or interesting and fun.
- Provide honest answers to the child's questions.
- Use reminders rather than questions when children forget or refuse to follow directions.
- Talk about the here and now.
- Talk about what the child is seeing or doing or what the child is interested in.
- Say the obvious.
- Everything has a name. Use it.
- Put the child's feelings into words.
- Use new words over and over again.
- Take a child's short response and put the response back into a whole sentence.
- When a child uses incorrect language, say what he or she was attempting to say correctly.
- Use a variety of sentence forms.
- Expand a child's thoughts by adding more information.
- Tell the child what you want him or her to do and not what you don't want him or her to do.
- Make statements that will encourage the child to continue his or her desirable activity.
- Praise children for efforts as well as accomplishments.
- Provide simple explanations to a child's questions.
- Explain the anticipated consequences of specific behaviors.
- Speak distinctly and use correct grammar.
- Never talk about a child when the child or other children are present.
- Talk with the children and not other staff during program hours unless the conversation is related to immediate program activities.
- Ask questions that will make a child respond with something other than yes or no. (open-ended questions). For example, "Tell me..."
- Provide clear directions and patience when handling transitions.
- Address each child by name every day.