

Supportive Conversations – Authentic and Meaningful Conversations

Summary

What is an authentic and meaningful conversation anyway?

- Educators engage in extended comfortable and positive conversation with children during routines and activities about the children's interests and ideas

What's the Point?

- Helps to facilitate positive relationships between children and educators
- These relationships become secure base that supports social, emotional, and cognitive development
- Allows the child to explore and extend on their interest and ideas
- Allows for adult support as children negotiate and problem solve during play
- Provides educator and child opportunities for co-learning and co-constructing

How Do I Do This?

- Observe children's play to find opportunities for connection
- Ask open-ended questions to encourage ongoing conversations that focus on children's play (toys, material, topic)
- Make comments on children's play
- Design routines and structure activities that allow for conversation. E.g., discussions during story time, conversations at the lunch table etc.

How Will the Children Participate in This Practice?

- Children provide the topic of conversations as they engage with educators
- Children select and decide on the materials used as they co-construct with educators
- Children can seek help or input from educators during play
- Children have the opportunity to work through real life situations through play with adult support

Checklist

Task	Complete?
Educator observes children during play and routines to find opportunities to connect.	
Educator ask children open-ended questions about their play and experiences, including questions that: • Demonstrate interest and/or request more information • Query what they are doing or what will happen next • Make connection to prior experience (related field trip, family stories etc.)	
Educator makes meaningful comments about children's play and experiences by: • Describing what they are doing • Repeat or paraphrase what they said then adding own input • Comment on the materials the child is focused on	
Educator provides enough wait time to allow children to respond to comments and questions (minimum 5 seconds).	
Educator takes into consideration children verbal, facial and body expressions to ensure they are still engaged in the conversation.	
Educators use either or both verbal and nonverbal (sign language, gestures, picture) to extend conversations	
Educator can reflect on or document meaningful conversations to share with families.	

Children's documented play and learning endeavours can be used to engage children, families, and educators in meaningful conversations about not only the outcome of learning events but, more importantly, the processes and qualities of being a learner.

Makovichuk, Hewes, Lirette & Thomas, 2014, p. 62

Flight: Alberta's early learning and care framework.

Retrieved from www.flightframework.ca

