

Positive Interactions with Children

Researchers found that it is immensely important for teachers to have interaction with their students and children in order for the child to grow up. Interaction at an early age is the basis for good relationships, which benefit the children in the long run. This interaction benefits every child very much, because they not only get one-on-one time to talk to their teacher, but they also produce positive relationships between teachers and students. Teachers, by doing this teacher-child interaction, the children can improve or develop good cognitive, socio-emotional and language skills.

Children not only obtain language and social skills, but they also obtain sensitivity, the ability to talk out problems, encouragement, and the ability to ask questions without fear or shame. Everyone can agree that not all teachers are alike. Credentials mean nothing, for example, if they have a Doctoral and are bad teachers, or just teachers who took all classes required and more in order to know what they were doing and are still clueless to what their specific style of teaching is.

Though there are people who say, "There is no such thing as bad students, just bad teachers." That person had a point, but teachers are not bad, they just haven't found their "great way to teach". My only suggestions would be to make sure that teachers have their own unique way of teaching and to do what they studied with their heart and soul - teach children something useful for the future in which they can look back and say, "I know this because a great teacher took the time to explain it." Good teachers teach; great teachers take time to explain, in depth and in simple words, so that the child understands the curriculum in simple matters.

Key Ingredients to Interactions

- Characteristics of individual staff members
- Age-appropriate conversations
- Having a mixture of child-initiated and adult-initiated conversations
- Staff is to interact while maintaining supervision and health and safety
- Staff maintains guidance of the group
- Communication between staff members

Listed below are 10 steps to having Quality Interactions with children:

Teachers interact frequently with children showing affection, interest, and respect.

- Teachers interact nonverbally by smiling, touching, holding
- Teachers speak with children at eye level
- Teachers talk and listen to children during activities and routines
- Teachers seek meaningful conversations
- Teachers give one-on-one attention to infants during feeding and diapering

Teachers are available and responsive to children.

- Quickly comfort infants in distress
- Reassure crying toddlers
- Listen to children with attention and respect
- Respond to children's questions and request
- Teachers are aware of the activities of the entire group even when dealing with a smaller group; staff position themselves strategically and look up often from the involvement
- Teachers spend time observing each child without interrupting an activity involving child

Teachers speak with children in a friendly, positive, courteous manner.

- Speak with individual children often
- Ask open-ended questions
- Call children by names
- Include children in conversations, describe actions, experiences, and events; listen and respond to children's comments and suggestions
- Talk with individual children, and encourage children of all ages to use language
- Treat children of all races, religions, family backgrounds, and cultures with equal respect and considerations
- Provide children of both sexes with equal opportunities to take part in all activities
- Encourage children's development of independent functioning, as appropriate
- Foster the development of age-appropriate self-help skills such as picking up toys, wiping spills, personal grooming (toilet and hand washing), obtaining and caring for materials, and other skills

Note: Cultural perspectives of family or community may influence expectations for independence.

Teachers facilitate the development of responsibility, self-regulation, and self-control in children.

- Teachers set clear, consistent, fair limits for classroom behavior and in the case of older children, help them set their own limits
- Teachers use children's mistakes as learning opportunities, describing the situation and encouraging children's evaluation of the problem rather than imposing the solution
- Teachers anticipate and eliminate potential problems, redirecting children to more acceptable behavior or activity
- Teachers listen and acknowledge children's feelings and frustrations and respond with respect
- Teachers guide children to resolve conflicts and model skills that help children to solve their own problems
- Teachers encourage appropriate behavior, patiently reminding children of rules and their rationale as needed
- Teachers apply logical or natural consequences in problem situations

Teachers do not use corporal punishment or other negative discipline methods that hurt, humiliate, or frighten children.

- Food or beverage is never withheld as a form of discipline
- The environment is arranged so that a minimal number of "No's" are used, especially with younger children

The overall sound of the group is pleasant most of the time.

- Happy laughter, excitement, busy activity, pleasant conversation rather than harsh, stressful noise or enforced quiet
- Adult voices do not dominate

Teachers support children's emotional development, assisting them to be comfortable, relaxed, happy, and involved in play and other activities.

- Comfort and reassure children who are hurt, fearful, or otherwise upset
- Help children deal with anger, frustration, or sadness by comforting, identifying, and reflecting feelings
- Intervene quickly when children's responses to each other become physically aggressive, discuss the inappropriateness of such action, and help children to develop more positive strategies to solve conflict
- Encourage children to verbalize feelings and ideas, including both positive and negative emotions. Supply words for very young children to describe feelings, discuss alternative solutions with children 2-years and older

Teachers recognize and encourage pro-social behaviors among children, such as cooperation, helping taking turns, talking to solve problems, and concern for others.

- Expectations of children's social behavior are developmentally appropriate

Teachers support children's beginning of friendships and provide opportunities for children to learn from each other as well as adults.

- Infants interact (look, touch gently, vocalize) freely with one another as teachers observe, alert to respond and model safe interactions
- Two pieces of the same popular equipment are available so toddlers are not forced to share too often
- Preschoolers are encouraged to cooperate in small groups

- Kindergartners work with small, flexible groups on extended projects and participate in group problem solving
- School-age children have the opportunities to participate in group games or to work or play alone

Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies to enhance children's learning and development throughout the day.

- Stimulate children's thinking and extend their learning using verbal methods such as posing problems, asking questions, and making comments and suggestions
- Introduce children to new experiences, ideas, and challenges
- Coach and/or directly guide children in the acquisition of specific skills as needed, being careful to challenge, but not frustrate any child
- Always smile and laugh. Have fun! Remember to get down to the children's eye level. Make sure you interact during meal times
- Respect the children. When a child comes to you with a problem, look them in the eyes, repeat what they say to you, then address
- Watch your tone of voice. Use words like, "how do you feel about...". Avoid using nicknames
- Ask about the children's day, listen to their response
- Initiate conversations
- Encourage a non-bias classroom
- Have children agree to limitations
- Use soft music in the classroom, use soft voices, lead by example
- Encourage children to help clean up

Infant Interactions

Suggestions on Positive and Safe Interactions for Infants

Be warm, loving, and responsive.

Children who receive warm and responsive care-giving and are securely attached to their caregivers, cope with difficult times more easily when they are older. They are more curious, get along better with other children, and perform better in school than children who are less securely attached.

Infants communicate their needs, preferences, and moods to the adults who care for them by the sounds they make, the way they move, their facial expressions, and the way they make or avoid eye contact. Children become securely attached when caregivers try to read these signals and respond with sensitivity. They begin to trust that when they smile, someone will smile back, that when they are upset, someone will comfort them, and that when they are hungry, someone will feed them.

You might think that a newborn might get spoiled with all this attention, but studies show that newborns that are more quickly and warmly responded to when crying typically learn to cry much less and sleep more at night. A baby expresses distress by crying. When the caregiver responds with food, warmth, or comfort, the baby tends to be calmed. The stress-response system in the brain is turned off and the infant's brain begins to create a network of brain cells that help the baby soothe themselves.

Talk, read, and sing to the child.

Infants learn from "conversations", even when they cannot understand what you are saying. When babies hear the same words over and over again, the part of the brain that handles speech and language develop. The time used to change a diaper or feed an infant can be an opportunity to spend some individual time with that child, talking, singing, and expanding on their own coos and gurgles.

Read picture books and stories to infants. By 6-months old, infants show excitement by widening their eyes and moving their arms and legs when looking at a book with pictures of babies and other similar objects.

Establish routines.

Daily routines associated with pleasurable feelings are reassuring for children. Repeated positive experiences provide for a sense of security. It helps a child learn what to expect from his environment and how to understand the world around them.

Encourage safe exploration and play.

Play is an important learning experience. Look around the environment you are providing for infants. Make sure there are enough interesting things for them to look at - not too many, but that there are things for the infant to focus on one at a time. Put the infant on the floor in safe areas that encourage them to move about. Keep containers that the infants can dump and fill. Adults should encourage exploration, and then also be receptive when the child needs to return to them for security.

By providing consistent and responsive care-giving, you can ensure that a child will have the best opportunity for healthy emotional and social development.

Every important caregiver has the potential to help shape a young child's future.