



Activity #5

SETTING INDIVIDUAL CHILD GOALS AND ASSESSING PROGRESS

Goal of activity: To gain a strong understanding of the progression of skills needed by children to engage in conversation, and to apply this knowledge to set individual goals for children and to assess children's progress.

Materials: Flip chart

Directions:

1. Have a group brainstorm. Generate a list of skills children must have in order to engage in conversations.
2. Record answers on flip chart.
3. As facilitator, be sure to fill in any obviously missing items on the list. A wide range of skills should be included. Some examples are:
 - Can make and hold eye contact
 - Responds to name
 - Understands others' words
 - Responds with facial expressions and gestures
 - Talks about what s/he is doing
 - Enjoys interacting with another
 - Will stay with you and continue interactions
 - Responds to verbal interactions non-verbally
 - Responds with words
 - Can engage in sustained back and forth interactions
 - Can stay focused on a topic
 - Can express a wide range of feelings, thoughts, and ideas
 - Engages in elaborate fantasy play

- Includes others' ideas in their play
4. Go over the list that the group has generated. Have them group the skills in to three rough categories: beginning skills, intermediate skills, and advanced skills.
 5. Break the group in to small discussion groups of 3-5.
 6. Have each small group identify a child in their class who is in the beginning skills category and a child who is in the advanced skills category.
 7. Have the small groups discuss the questions below, considering both children.
 8. Return to the full group and have small groups report the goals they chose for each child and how they would evaluate progress.

Discussion questions for small groups:

For each of the identified children:

- What skills have they mastered?
- What skills do you see emerging (skills they use sometimes, or can do with encouragement)?
- What might be the next step for this child (what can't they do successfully yet)?
- The identified next step for the child is a possible expressive language goal. How will you know if they are progressing in this goal? What exactly will the child be doing in their interactions that will let you know that they are progressing?
- In what ways can you support this child's conversation skills development in your interactions with them?
- How could you communicate this goal with the child's parent(s) and help them to support the child's development at home?