

# INFANT & TODDLER TEACHER-CHILD INTERACTIONS

Strong teacher-child connections grow through everyday moments of observing, responding, and engaging in meaningful conversations.

## FOLLOW THE CHILD'S LEAD (PERSONAL & SOCIAL)

### Focus:

- Build relationships by responding to children's interests during play and routines.

### Key Practices:

- Observe what captures a child's attention
- Offer materials that extend their interest
- Value repetition as meaningful learning

### Try Saying:

- "You're filling up the bucket!"
- "Let's see how much fits inside."
- "You like putting things in and taking them out."

### Reflect:

- Do I respond to children's actions or rely on my planned activities?
- Do I allow time for repeated play, or rush transitions?

## BUILD LANGUAGE SKILLS (LANGUAGE)

### Focus:

- Support communication through responsive, intentional talk.

### Key Practices:

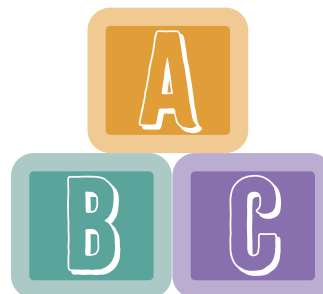
- Narrate routines using simple language
- Repeat and expand children's words
- Pause to allow children time to respond

### Try Saying:

- "Up? Would you like me to pick you up?"
- "You like the peas—they taste good."
- "I'm going to use the wipe now."

### Reflect:

- How consistently do I respond and expand on children's communication?
- Where can I create more opportunities for meaningful conversation?



## SUPPORT SELF-HELP SKILLS (COGNITIVE)

### Focus:

- Encourage independence through everyday routines.

### Key Practices:

- Break skills into manageable steps
- Allow time for independent attempts
- Model slowly and offer encouragement
- Acknowledge effort, not just success

### Try Saying:

- “You’re trying to put on your shoes.”
- “Would you like help with the first part?”
- “You pulled your pants up all by yourself!”

### Reflect:

- Do I give children enough time to try on their own?
- How does my schedule support independence?

## ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT (PHYSICAL)

### Focus:

- Help children build new physical skills safely and confidently.

### Key Practices:

- Provide safe, accessible materials and space
- Place objects to encourage reaching and movement
- Encourage practice through consistent routines
- Follow the child’s cues for support vs. independence

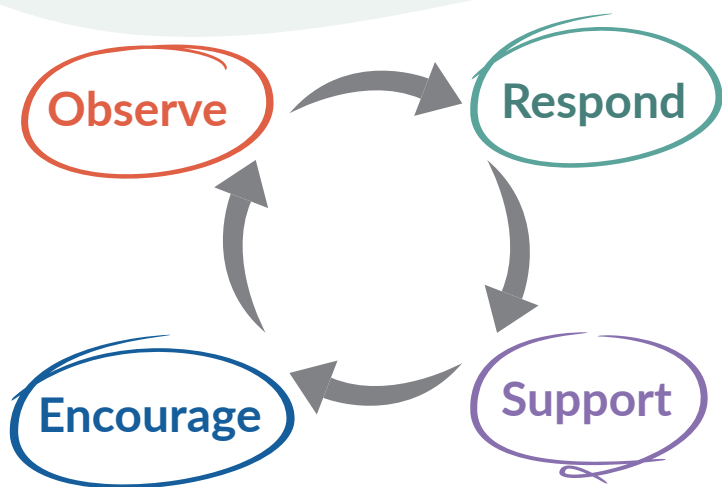
### Try Saying:

- “Keep trying—you’re almost there!”
- “Try using both hands.”
- “Would you like help?”

### Reflect:

- Is my environment set up to promote safe movement?
- How do I decide when to help versus encourage persistence?

## SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT ALL DAY, EVERY DAY!



MARYLANDE<sup>✓</sup>XCELS