

Using Your Knowledge of Child Development to Promote Communication

WHAT PRESCHOOL CHILDREN ARE LIKE	HOW TEACHERS CAN USE THIS INFORMATION TO PROMOTE COMMUNICATION
They sometimes talk to themselves—not for the purpose of communicating with anyone, but simply to practice talking and to amuse themselves.	Notice when children are doing this. Talk to them about what you observe. "You were really enjoying digging with that shovel in the sandbox. You even made up a song about it."
They tend to use language freely and creatively in dramatic play.	Put out props familiar to the children to encourage dramatic play. Help shy children enter the group so they can learn to communicate more and feel a part of the group.
They are able to remember stories and tell them back, sometimes in correct sequence.	Repeat favorite stories. Select some story books with simple themes that include a lot of repetition. Talk to children about the stories and help them recall events so they improve their communication skills.
They like to make up stories of their own.	Be a good listener. Write the stories that preschoolers dictate and read them back so the children are encouraged to make up more stories.
They use language creatively, like to make up words and enjoy rhymes, and nonsense words and poems.	Select some books to read for the pure enjoyment of the words in the book. Notice rhymes and words children make up and repeat them for fun and to encourage them to use language creatively.
They ask lots of questions.	Be a good listener. Respond in ways that help children extend their thinking.
They draw pictures and create other representations that look like something. They often name what they make.	Encourage children to talk about what they have made. "Would you like to tell me something about your drawing?" After they have spoken, write what they say to show them that written words capture what they say.
They like to share experiences—things that have happened to them.	Take time to listen to what each child has to say. Comment on what they share to show you are interested.

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