

Language Development Activity: Dramatic Play Vignettes

Language develops when adults working with children focus on expanding and extending children's language by:

- beginning meaningful conversations with open-ended questions or statements,
- expressing interest and listening to the child's reply,
- tailoring their responses, extension questions and expansions to individual children
- introducing new words, concepts and linguistic structures in an authentic way.

Below are two vignettes that examine language exchanges in the Dramatic Play Area:

Vignette 1

T: What are you making?

C: Eggs.

T: They look delicious. May I have some?

C: Okay!

Vignette 2

T: What are you cooking?

C: Eggs.

T: Oh, I love eggs! What ingredients are you going to use?

C: I don't know.

T: Let's see. I made eggs on Sunday. Let's see if we can find some of the ingredients that I used. (Taking out spices and milk). Here, I used pepper, parsley, and milk. What are some other ingredients that we can add to the eggs?

C: My mommy puts in green peppers and cheese.

T: Great idea! Now, how should we cook them?

C: We could stir them and then put them in a pan.

T: It sounds like you're describing scrambled eggs. You stir them while they're cooking. We call that scrambling. You know other children might want your recipe. Why don't I get a big piece of paper and we can write down the ingredients we used to make our scrambled eggs. Now, what's the first thing the children will need to do?...

How do these two vignettes differ?

What is the teacher doing in vignette 2?

How do the children respond?

Language Development Activity: Asking Questions

This resource is designed to examine two different types of questions, open-ended and closed-ended. All questions should serve a specific purpose when supporting young children's language development (SELA Item 6) and introducing new words, concepts and linguistic structures (SELA Item 7).

1. How do open-ended questions differ from closed-ended questions?

2. Identify the following questions or statements as either open-ended or closed-ended. If the question or statement is closed, please rewrite the question or statement as open-ended.

Tell me about your building. _____

What are you making? _____

Is it rough or smooth? _____

What does this feel like? _____

How would you describe this? _____

What do you think made the ladybug in the story feel this way? _____

Have you ever felt grouchy? _____

What are some things that make you grouchy? _____

How was your weekend? _____

What did you do over the weekend? _____

How do you know what kind of clothes to wear in the morning? _____

What are you building? _____

What are you planning to do in Dramatic Play today? _____

Language Development Activity: Brainstorming Open-Ended Questions, Statements, and Conversation Starters

This resource can be used to identify open-ended questions, statements and conversation starters that can be used throughout the day to support children's language development.

Please list a few open-ended questions, statements, or conversation starters you might use to encourage and extend young children's language.

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|-----------------------------------|--|
| <u>Arrival</u> | <u>Block Area</u> |
| <u>Circle Time</u> | <u>Drawing and Writing Center</u> |
| <u>Library Center</u> | <u>Science Center</u> |
| <u>Dramatic Play</u> | <u>Manipulatives/Table Toys</u> |
| <u>Snack or Lunch Time</u> | <u>Dismissal</u> |

Supporting Language Development: Open-Ended Questions, Statements, and Conversation Starters

This resource provides a few open-ended questions, statements and conversation starters that can be used throughout the day to support children's language development. You may wish to post a few of these around your classroom. Feel free to brainstorm and add your own!

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|---|--|
| <p><u>Arrival</u> Tell me about some of the things you did last night. What did you have for dinner? What TV shows did you watch?</p> | <p><u>Block Area</u> Tell me about your building. What would the inside of your ... look like? What will you do next? How will you do that?</p> |
| <p><u>Circle Time</u> Tell me about...What was your favorite...? What do you think about...? How many ways can we...?</p> | <p><u>Drawing and Writing Center</u> Tell me about what you're working on. What would you like me to write about what you just told me? Tell me about how you...</p> |
| <p><u>Library Center</u> What do you think this story will be about? How do you think the story will end? Why? Who was your favorite character in the story?</p> | <p><u>Science Center</u> How would you describe this? What do you think would happen if...? How are they alike? How are they different?</p> |
| <p><u>Dramatic Play</u> Who are you going to be today? How will you do that? What's your favorite thing to do in Dramatic Play? How can we find out...? What ingredients are you using? Why?</p> | <p><u>Manipulatives/Table Toys</u> Tell me about your... What would happen if...? What are some other ways to build this? What do you think would happen if...?</p> |
| <p><u>Snack or Lunch Time</u> Discuss any of these topics: field trips, special events in class/world, weather, movies, funny thing saw on way to school, strange dreams, things thinking about, great book you're reading, or what's new with your/their families.</p> <p>You might also place a prop on the table to spark discussion (e.g., a gourd).</p> | <p><u>Dismissal</u> What was your favorite part of the day? Tell me about some of the things you did today. What else did you do? How did you do that? Tell me something you want to do tomorrow.</p> |