Building Language & Social-Emotional Skills with Responsive Conversations

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Importance of
Oral Language &
Social-Emotional Skills

Oral Language

Is the system of words and word combinations used to communicate with others through **speaking and listening**.

Develops from birth!

We use oral language to express and comprehend **knowledge, ideas, and feelings**.

Infants
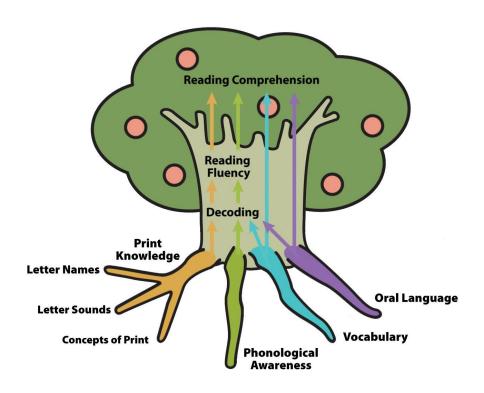
Toddlers

Preschoolers
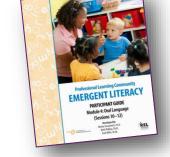
Language Supports Later Reading

The Literacy Tree

The Simple View of Reading

Decoding x Listening Comprehension = Reading Comprehension

Social-Emotional Skills

Is the competencies we use to build **relationships**, express **emotions** appropriately, and make responsible **decisions**.

Develops from birth!

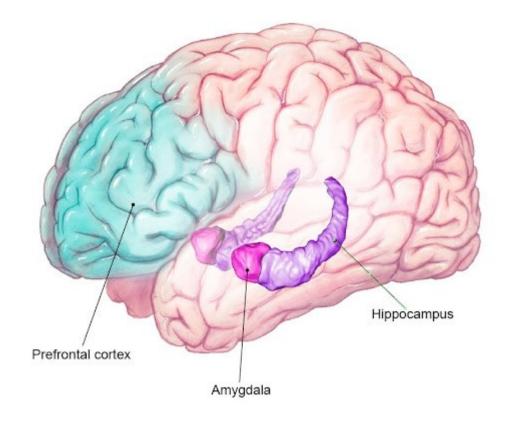We use social-emotional skills to describe and manage how we **think, act, and feel**.

Infants

Toddlers

Preschoolers

What Happens in the Brain to Regulate Emotions?

Prefrontal cortex

Hippocampus

Amygdala

Left inferior frontal gyrus

What is a Multiple-Turn Conversation?

When two or more people talk with each other to share ideas and information.

Helps you build connections with children and learn about their interests.
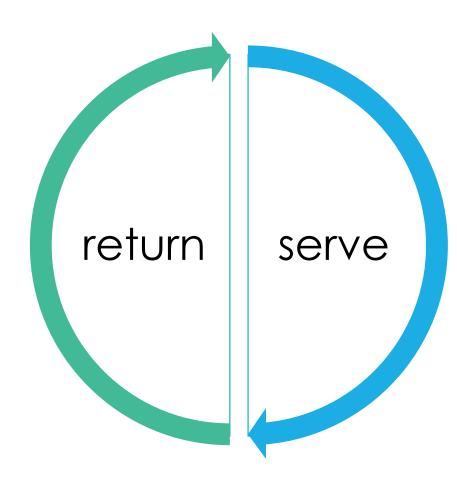
Encourages children's cognitive development, social skills, and emotional maturity.

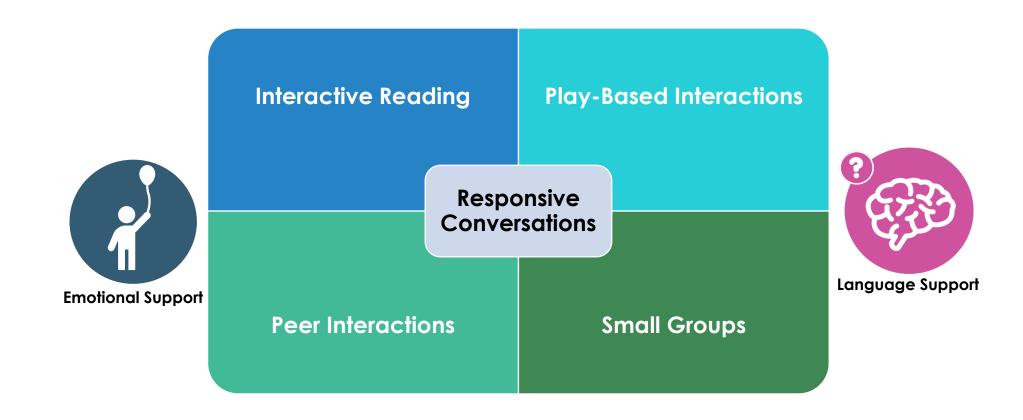CHILDREN'S LEARNING INSTITUTE.

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What is a responsive conversation partner?

Daily Routines that Foster Responsive, Multiple-Turn Conversations

4 Routines for Brain Building

1. Play-Based Interactions with Caregiver Conversations

- Free play and play-based interactions with caregiver scaffolding should be a daily part of every preschool classroom.

- Scaffold children's language development as they direct their own play activities.

2. Small-Group Activities with Caregiver Conversations

- Small-group interactions with caregiver **scaffolding** should be a daily part of every early childhood classroom.

- Effects for small-group literacy instruction can be about **10 times greater** than whole-class instruction.

3. Peer-to-Peer Language & Play Interactions

Provide multiple opportunities and meaningful contexts to **practice newly acquired language and literacy** skills.

Support strong **social communication** skills. Enable children to develop secure relationships with others.

Children with lower behavior regulation skills at the start of school year **benefit from working and playing with more advanced peers**.

4. Interactive Reading

Intentional use of **comments and questions** to facilitate a discussion of **quality literature**.

Use with **any** group size.

Provide multiple opportunities for children to engage in **conversation.**

Read the **same book multiple times**.

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What kinds of conversation are effective during interactive reading?
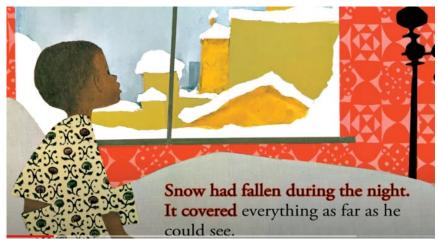
Concrete Questions

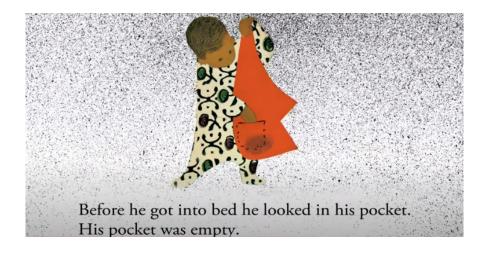- Answers directly stated in text

Abstract Questions

- Answer require combining information across pages, inferences, or background knowledge

Open-ended Questions

Wh-, Why, How What if Questions
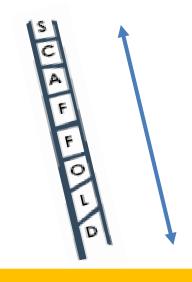
- Require a multiple word response from child

Snow had fallen during the night. It covered everything as far as he could see.

Before he got into bed he looked in his pocket. His pocket was empty.

Scaffolded Conversations that Build Trust

Scaffolding to Support Children's Language

**Upward Scaffold –
Add Challenge**

**Downward Scaffold –
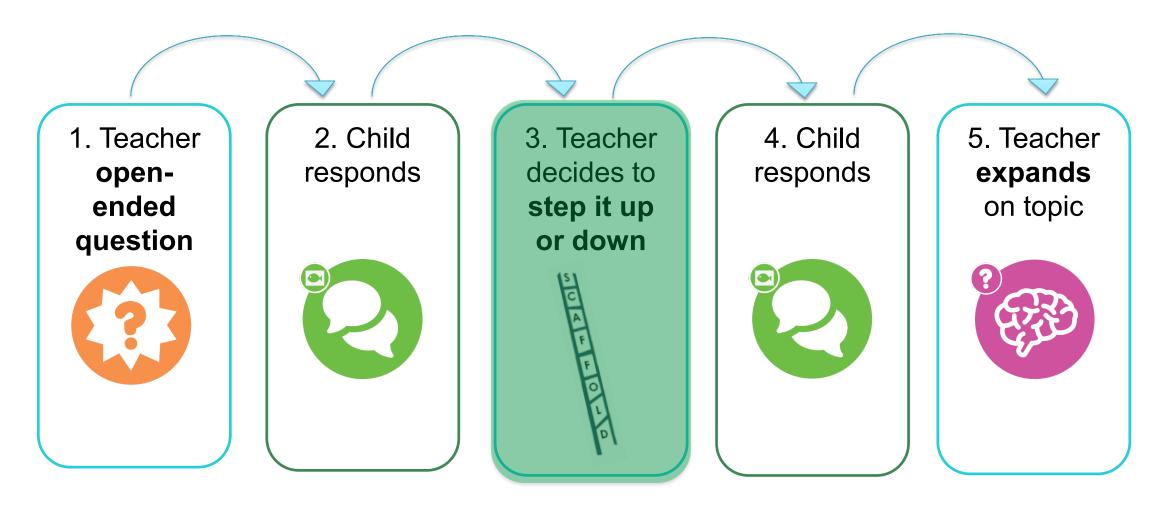Support & Simplify**

41% of scaffolding
opportunities taken

Scaffolding strategies are **explanations**, **hints, models, or follow-up questions** caregivers use to organize child thinking or to simplify a task to a level the child can perform with some support.

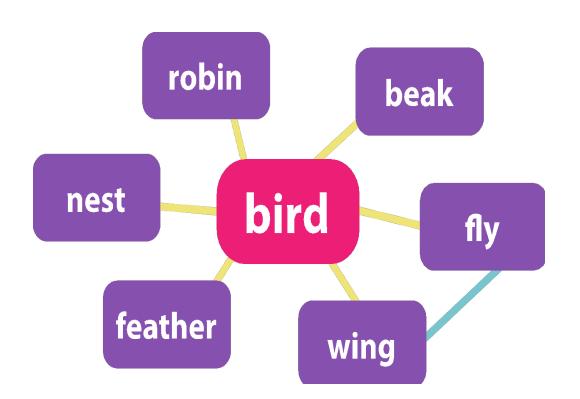Effective scaffolds are *contingent responses* that match the child's level of understanding.

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Lexical Knowledge – Word Networks

robin

beak

nest
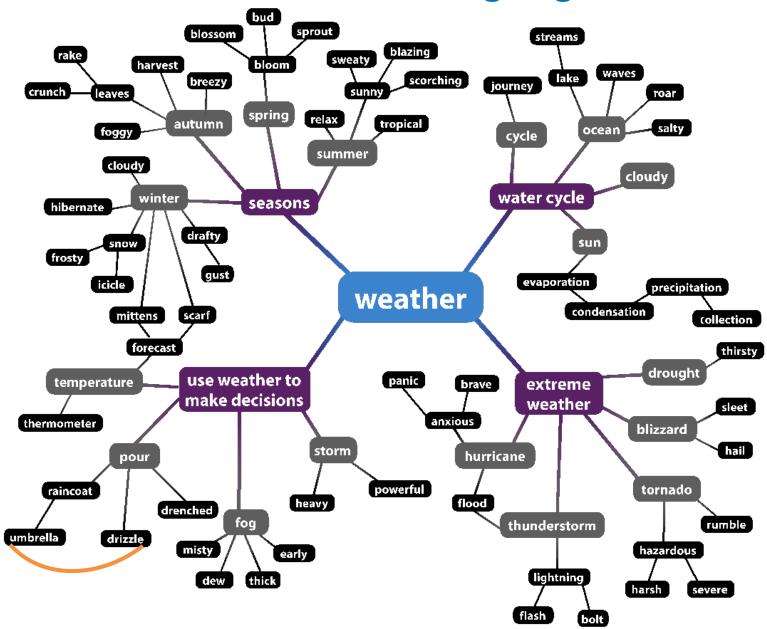
bird

fly

feather

wing

Lexical knowledge (knowledge of words) is organized in **networks of meaning**

A network of words helps us learn new words that **connect to words that we already know**

Example Network of Words: Teaching Higher-Level Categories

Which Vocabulary Words Do I Teach?

Basic Words

- Common words
- Typically **learned independently** through daily conversations or shared reading
- Examples: *phone, book, mad*

Domain-general Sophisticated Words

- Used in a variety of texts and learning domains
- More **precise or complex form** of a concept
- High mileage because important in school/texts
- Examples: *clever, complicated, frustrated*
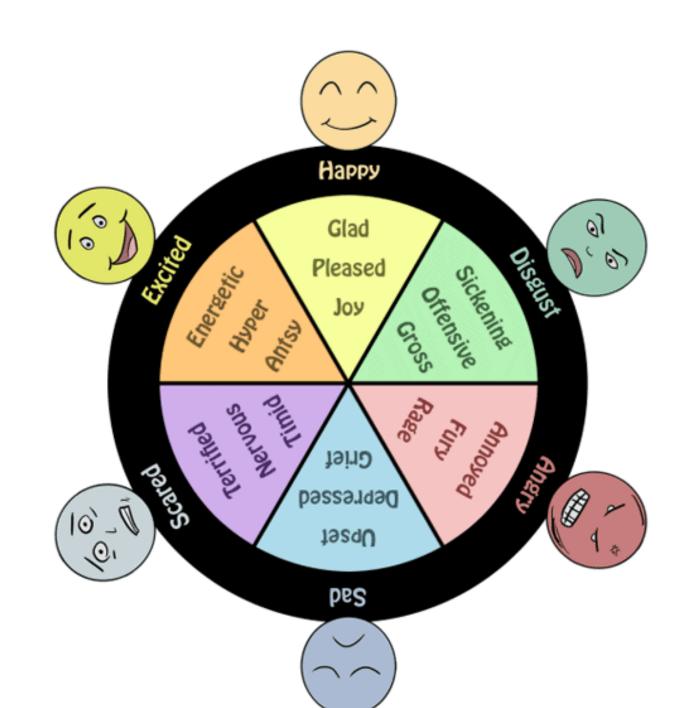
Domain-specific Technical Words

- Specific to a learning domain or subject area.
- Important for comprehension of **informational text genres**
- Examples: *nutrients, recycle, ukulele*

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"The Emotion Wheel"

Emotions: There's more than *mad, sad, happy*

Supporting Language &
Responsive Conversations
with **Developing Talkers**
Approach

Evidence-Based Developing Talkers Routines

Before Reading

- Teach 2 to 3 **vocabulary**
- Use a picture care
- Child-friendly definition
- Give a focus with **Guiding Question**

During Reading

- **Self-regulate** attention and turn-taking
- Thumbs up at pages with vocabulary
- Ask open-ended questions

After Reading

- Answer Guiding Question
- **Scaffold** responses
- Encourage children to use these "amazing words"

Language & SEL Module

PreK ON MY WAY™

developing talkers

PREK ON MY WAY FEATURES:

- A developmentally appropriate curriculum supplement that **builds language and SEL skills**
- Developing Talkers read alouds provide opportunities for meaningful, multi-turn classroom **conversations.**
- Mind Builders provide essential skills that **support a child's growth in social-emotional**, executive function, motivation and creativity
- Family conversation starters to extend their **learning beyond the classroom**

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