



The National Center on
Quality Teaching and Learning

Learning Activities

Engaging Children in Conversations



1 Beginning the conversation: The purpose of this activity is to get participants to start thinking about basic elements of conversations. Ask participants to reflect on their own personal conversation experiences or their experiences conversing with children in their classrooms. Using the following open-ended questions have the participants discuss in small groups their responses and bullet main ideas to share with the group:

- What do you and/or the children you work with love to talk about?
- What do you and/or the children you work with find annoying, frustrating or do not enjoy in conversations?

After groups have had enough time to discuss these questions have each group share. While sharing, record discussed ideas onto a sheet visible to participants. Tally repeated ideas to indicate multiple similar responses. Leave these ideas up throughout the training and refer back to similarities as you discuss engaging in meaningful conversations with children.

2 Video review: Using included training videos and the attached video viewing guide engage participants in a discussion on examples they noticed of teacher-child conversation. Have participants watch the video twice and identify key elements the teacher uses to engage children in conversations. This can be discussed in small groups at the table or in one large group. If participants do not see examples of a key element have them brainstorm how that element could be embedded into the conversation.

3 Conversations around the classroom: Using classroom learning centers have participants brainstorm conversational topics. If you are meeting with teachers in their classroom, have them tour the learning centers and role play conversations about the materials and potential activities. If you are not in a classroom use photographs of learning centers to role play these conversations.