

Birth to Five

This guide offers suggestions for presenting **Language Modeling and Conversations: Expansions, Birth to Five**. This in-service suite is intended for a birth to five, center-based audience. It includes a PowerPoint presentation and supporting materials. Please use and adapt as necessary.

Handouts for *Tips for Teachers*, *Tools for Teachers*, *Helpful Resources*, and the learning activities include versions with information that is specific to infants and toddlers.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- PowerPoint presentation (19 slides)
- Optional slide: *Say HELLO*
- Projector and audio equipment
- Learning Activities:
 - » *Practicing Responses that Expand—Infants and Toddlers*
 - » *Practicing Responses that Expand—Preschoolers*
 - » *Capturing Expansions Video Activity—Infants and Toddlers*
 - » *Capturing Expansions Video Activity—Preschoolers*
 - » *Developing an Action Plan*
- Tips for Teachers
- Tools for Teachers
- Tools for Supervisors
- Helpful Resources
- Flip chart or similar large paper, and markers for writing participant ideas

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- This presentation focuses specifically on strategies for extending and expanding conversations with children, including young infants and toddlers.
- This is one in a series of in-service suites called *Language Modeling and Conversations*.
- Learning activities offer participants opportunities to discuss, practice, and plan for conversations that expand on children's words.
- HELLO is an overarching framework that links and organizes the five in-service suites on *Language Modeling and Conversations*. HELLO is described in the optional slide at the end of this document, as well as in *Tools for Teachers* and *Tools for Supervisors* handouts. These three documents appear in each of the five in-service suites.

NOTE

The Importance of Home Language

Because language and culture are closely related, one of the primary tasks for young children is to learn their home language(s). This is an important concept to share during training. For more specific information on promoting conversations that are culturally and linguistically responsive, refer to these resources:

Revisiting and Updating the Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs Serving Children Birth to Five

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/Dual%20Language%20Learners/pdm/responsiveness/revisiting.htm>

News You Can Use: Foundations of School Readiness: Language and Literacy

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/docs/nycu-school-readiness-language-literacy.pdf>

Strategies for Supporting All Dual Language Learners, from the National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/fcp/docs/dll-strategies.pdf>





SLIDE 1: EXPANSIONS, BIRTH TO FIVE

Introductions:

- Begin the training by giving participants background information about yourself.
- Provide an opportunity for participants to introduce themselves (where they are working, their current role, etc.).
- Ask participants to share a favorite topic they like to talk about.

Introduce the topic.

Expansions, Birth to Five, focuses on learning to build on what children say or do to create opportunities for extended conversations with them.

Points to highlight:

- Infants and toddlers communicate through facial expressions, gestures, body, and vocalizations. With repeated exposure to rich language and conversational interactions with trusted adults, infants and toddlers learn words for objects, people, animals, places, actions, feelings and emotions, and begin to use these words to communicate with others.
- For children of all ages, engaging them in extended conversations fosters their language and cognitive development as well as their social skills.
- The quality of what is said in the conversation greatly impacts these benefits. Hart & Risley (1995) found that both the number of words and the quality of the language children heard before their third birthday impacted their 3rd grade language and IQ test results. Quality was measured both as vocabulary (different kinds of words—nouns, adjectives, verbs) and the complexity of sentences (sentences with two or more clauses, past tense verbs, or questions).
- Repeating what a child says or does helps to keep a child in the conversation.

NOTE

The reference for the study cited above is:

Hart, B., & Risley, T. R. (1995). *Meaningful differences in the everyday experience of young American children*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

See the Hart & Risley (2003) listing in the *Helpful Resources* handout for an article that summarizes findings from the study.





SLIDE 2: NCQTL'S FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE EVERYDAY PRACTICE

Introduce NCQTL.

The four components of the House Framework support school readiness for all children:

- The foundation represents effective and engaging interactions and environments.
- The pillars represent research-based curricula and teaching practices and ongoing child assessment.
- The roof represents highly individualized teaching and learning.
- All components interact with each other and are essential to effective practices.

This in-service suite is part of the *foundation* of the House. Expansions help extend conversations and support engaging interactions between children and teachers in the classroom.



SLIDE 3: OBJECTIVES

- To understand how expansions create opportunities for extended conversation
- To learn how expansions promote children's language and thinking
- To identify strategies used to expand on what children say

OPTIONAL SLIDE PPT

The optional slide, *Say HELLO*, provides a visual overview that represents the five in-service suites on *Language Modeling and Conversations*. Show this slide if you plan to present all five of these in-service suites. Presenter notes for the optional slide are provided at the end of this document.



WHAT ARE EXTENDED CONVERSATIONS?



Extended conversations are **rich back-and-forth exchanges** that help children develop more complex language, thinking, and social skills.



Adults take a more active role with infants and toddlers.

SLIDE 4: WHAT ARE EXTENDED CONVERSATIONS?

Extended conversations are rich, multiple back-and-forth exchanges that help children develop more complex language, thinking skills, and social skills.

For infants and toddlers, adults take on a more active role to help children continue a conversation and ensure that they have frequent opportunities to interact.

- **Rich exchanges:** A conversation where the adult uses a varied vocabulary and complex sentence forms, and the infant or toddler responds through facial expressions, gestures, body language, vocalizations, and increasingly complex words, phrases, and sentences.

For preschool children, extended conversations are rich back-and-forth exchanges that also help them develop more complex language and thinking skills.

- **Rich exchanges:** A conversation that includes a varied vocabulary and complex sentence forms.

For all children, **back-and-forth exchanges** are conversations with equal communication, verbal or non-verbal, between the child and adult (taking turns).

EXPANDING ON WHAT CHILDREN SAY SCAFFOLDS CONVERSATIONS

- Listen to the child.
- Match tone of voice and emotion.
- Repeat or reword and then expand.
- Follow the child's lead.
- Give her time to respond.
- Engage in several back-and-forth exchanges.



SLIDE 5: EXPANDING ON WHAT CHILDREN SAY SCAFFOLDS CONVERSATIONS

Expansions are responses that add language to what children communicate or say, and extend the conversation.

To expand on what a child is communicating:

- Listen to the child.
- Match the tone of her voice and emotions.
- Repeat or reword and then expand on what she is trying to say.
- Follow the child's lead.
- Give the child time to respond.
- Engage in several back-and-forth exchanges.

NOTE

Scaffolding is when adults help children build on what they're able to do by giving them just the right amount of help. This means varying the type of support and the level of support, in response to what the child needs in that moment.



EXPANDING CONVERSATIONS

INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Expansions provide additional language in response to children's communications to extend conversations.



Child: Bwed in!

Teacher: Yes! The bread goes in the toaster to make toast.

Child: Bwed up up?

Teacher: Yes! When the bread is done toasting, it pops up. What would you like to put on your toast?

SLIDE 6: EXPANDING CONVERSATIONS WITH INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Expansions extend conversations with infants and toddlers by providing additional language in response to their verbal and nonverbal communications.

- Expanding on young children's communications—facial expressions, gestures, body language, vocalizations, and words—is an important way to scaffold their language development and extend conversations.
- Expansions provide infants and toddlers with additional language that specifically relates to what they do (actions such as eye gaze, body language, gestures, play) or say (vocalizations such as cooing and babbling, and words).
- Expansions invite infants and toddlers to take another turn in the conversation.

The adult can then expand on the child's response again, inviting another response from the child and continuing to extend the conversation.

Here's an example of how an adult might use expansions with a toddler.

Child: Bwed in!

Teacher: Yes! The bread goes in the toaster to make toast.

Child: Bwed up up?

Teacher: Yes! When the bread is done toasting, it pops up. What would you like to put on your toast?



EXPANDING CONVERSATIONS

PRESCHOOLERS

Expansions provide additional language in response to children's words to extend conversations.



Child: Look a plane!

Teacher: I see a plane flying high in the sky.

Child: I go on a plane with my grandma before.

Teacher: You went on a plane with your grandma. Where did the plane take you?

SLIDE 7: EXPANDING CONVERSATIONS WITH PRESCHOOLERS

Expansions provide additional language in response to children's words to extend conversations.

- Expanding on children's words is an important way to scaffold children's language development and extend conversations.
- Expansions provide children with additional language that specifically relates to their comments or actions.
- Expansions invite children to take another turn in the conversation.

The adult can then expand on the child's response again, inviting another reply and continuing to extend the conversation.

Here's an example of how an adult might use expansions with a preschooler.

Child: Look a plane!

Teacher: I see a plane flying high in the sky.

Child: I go on a plane with my grandma before.

Teacher: You went on a plane with your grandma. Where did the plane take you?





Length of video: Approximately 17 seconds

SLIDE 8: VIDEO: A WET SLEEVE—TODDLER

Introduce the video.

This video shows a teacher talking with a toddler and then expanding on what the child does and says to continue the conversation. Have participants listen for and take notes on how this teacher expands on the child's topic.

VIDEO 

DISCUSSION 

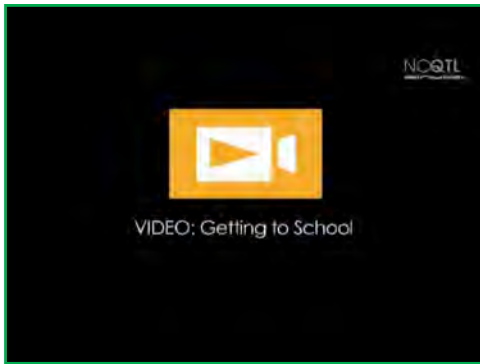
Ask participants to share how the teacher expanded on the child's gestures and words to build an extended conversation. Even though the child's words are difficult to understand, the teacher comprehends the gist of what the child says and is able to extend the conversation.

Some possible examples:

The child showed the teacher her sleeve and clearly said the word, "wet." The teacher expanded on this by saying, "Is your sleeve a little bit wet? It is a little bit wet."

The child verbalized, and the teacher interpreted and rephrased what she said by adding more information. "I know, in the sink. It got a little bit wet, didn't it? Some water splashed on it."





Length of video: Approximately 37 seconds

SLIDE 9: VIDEO: GETTING TO SCHOOL— PRESCHOOLER

Introduce the video.

This video shows a teacher listening to a child, and then expanding on what the child says to continue the conversation. Have participants listen for and take notes on how this teacher expands on the child's topic.

VIDEO 

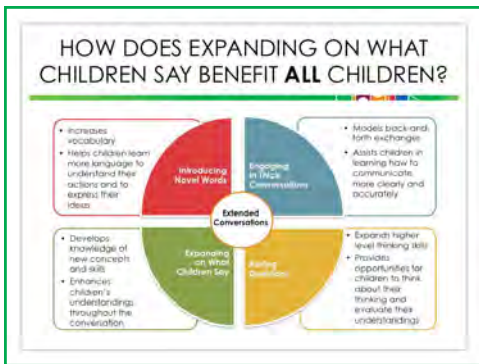
DISCUSSION 

Ask participants to share how the teacher expanded on the child's words to build an extended conversation.

Some possible examples:

- The child said, "She can't take the car." The teacher expanded by rephrasing what the child said in a more complex form, "She couldn't drive the car?"
- The teacher provided a summary of what the child said, "So you were in your car seat and the car was stuck in the mud?"





SLIDE 10: HOW DOES EXPANDING ON WHAT CHILDREN SAY BENEFIT **ALL** CHILDREN?

Extended conversations benefit children's:

- Language development.
- Cognitive development.
- Social and emotional development.

For all children, extended conversations:

- **Provide models** of appropriate conversation skills.
- **Support** higher level thinking through meaningful questioning.
- **Expand** on children's communication and language by including new concepts and skills.
- **Increase** children's receptive and expressive vocabularies by introducing new words and concepts.

The graphic on this slide illustrates the four components of extended conversations:

- Engaging in thick conversations
- Asking questions
- Expanding on what children say
- Introducing novel words

This presentation focuses on the third component, **expanding on what infants and toddlers communicate, and what preschool children say**. Expanding on their verbal and nonverbal communications:

- Develops children's knowledge of new words, concepts, and skills.
- Enhances and deepens children's understandings throughout the conversation.



SLIDE 11: HOW DOES EXPANDING ON WHAT CHILDREN SAY BENEFIT TEACHERS?

- Teachers can add new words and information to the conversation and increase the opportunities for teachable moments.
- Teachers can use extended conversations to gather information for ongoing child assessment, curriculum planning, and individualization.
- Teachers gain a deeper understanding of what each child knows and understands.





SLIDE 12: EXPAND ON CHILDREN'S COMMUNICATIONS TO SCAFFOLD LANGUAGE—INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Expanding by adding more language to a child's communications keeps the conversation going.

Expansions provide teachers with the opportunity to model and introduce more complex language. Teachers can expand on children's communications in several key ways. They can:

- Make clear children's nonverbal and verbal communications by describing what children are doing and saying.

Example:

Child: Reaches in the direction of a stuffed animal.

Teacher: "You want to play with the monkey, don't you, Marcus? I'll move it closer so you can reach it."

- Make the child's communication more complete and complex.

Example:

Child: "Me go."

Teacher: "Yes, Nathan. Your dad is here to pick you up and you can go home with him. I'll see you tomorrow."

- Use more precise and interesting words to respond to the child's communication.

Example:

Child: While reading a book with the teacher, Alexa points to an illustration and says, "Dog."

Teacher: "You're right, Alexa. The animal in the drawing does look like a dog. Actually, though, it's a fox. The fox has a very long nose, a bushy tail, and it can't bark."

Using these three simple strategies, teachers can extend conversations with children while scaffolding language skills and cognitive development.





SLIDE 13: EXPAND ON CHILDREN'S WORDS TO SCAFFOLD LANGUAGE— PRESCHOOLERS

Expanding by adding more language to a child's words keeps the conversation going.

Expansions provide teachers with the opportunity to model and introduce more complex language. Teachers can expand on children's words in several key ways. They can:

- Make children's phrases more complete by adding more words to make a longer sentence.
Example:
Child: "There's a spider."
Teacher: "It is a spider with eight legs."
- Make children's phrases more complex by rephrasing what children say in a slightly more complex form. This approach provides a model for how to correctly form complex sentences.
Example:
Child: "There's a spider there."
Teacher: "There is a spider over in the corner under the sink."
- Increase vocabulary by adding novel and interesting words that build on children's comments.
Example:
Child: "There's a spider."
Teacher: "It is a spider, an arachnid."

Using these three simple strategies, teachers can extend conversations with children while scaffolding language skills and cognitive development.





SLIDE 14: EXPAND ON CHILDREN'S COMMUNICATIONS TO SCAFFOLD THINKING—INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Expanding on children's verbal and nonverbal communications by adding new information scaffolds children's thinking, and provides new information that can be used to extend the conversation.

There are several ways to expand on children's facial expressions, gestures, vocalizations, and words to promote thinking:

- **Clarify and summarize thoughts:** Build on what children are doing and communicating by highlighting key points.

Example:

Child: Frowns and pushes blocks away from him.

Teacher: "You pushed the blocks away. Let's find something else for you to play with."

- **Link to what the child already knows (prior knowledge):** Add to children's actions or comments by referring to their prior experiences or actions.

Example:

Child: Takes teacher's hand, points outside, and says, "I go out."

Teacher: "Yes, soon it will be time to go outside. We play outside every morning."

- **Apply to the child's world:** Help children make connections to experiences beyond the classroom.

Example:

Child: Pushes bottle away.

Teacher: "You're done with your bottle. The next bottle you have will be at home with your family."

- **Connect concepts:** Build on children's actions and words to help them explore relationships between concepts.

Example:

Child: Pulling at the sleeves of her sweater, child says, "Want off."

Teacher: "Let's take your sweater off. You're probably feeling warm because it's gotten hotter outside than when we first came out to play."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



- **Relate to the child's life:** Connect children's gestures, facial expressions, vocalizations, and words with their experiences at home, with family members, and in the community.

Example:

Child: Pointing to the classroom fish tank, child says "Mine."

Teacher: "Ethan, you have fish at home, don't you? Can you please help me feed our fish like you do at home?"

- **Relate to the child's actions:** Use children's gestures and comments to help them reflect on what they're doing in that moment.

Example:

Child: Rubs eyes.

Teacher: "You rub your eyes when you're tired. Are you ready for a nap?"

- **Explain thinking:** Expand on children's actions and comments by describing how to think through the situation (self-talk).

Example:

Child: Grasps a rattle and waves her arm.

Teacher: "Listen! Your rattle made a sound when you waved your arm. And you gurgled and smiled when you heard it!"

- **Ask open-ended questions** that support higher-level thinking and invite children to think deeper.

Example:

Child: After several failed attempts to make a tower of foam blocks, child says, "I can't do it."

Teacher: "Let's try to do this together. I'm going to hold this long block steady on the floor. What block do you think would be good to put on next? Why did you choose that block?"

These expansion strategies provide opportunities to extend conversations with children while also stimulating their thinking and learning.





SLIDE 15: EXPAND ON CHILDREN'S WORDS TO SCAFFOLD **THINKING**—PRESCHOOLERS

Expanding on children's words by adding new information scaffolds children's thinking and provides new information that can be used to extend the conversation.

There are several ways to expand on children's words to promote thinking:

- **Summarize thoughts:** Build on children's comments and actions by highlighting key points related to what they've said or done.
- **Link to prior knowledge:** Add to children's comments by incorporating prior class activities or children's actions into the current conversation.
- **Apply to the child's world:** Assist children in making connections to experiences beyond the classroom.
- **Connect concepts:** Build on children's words to help them explore relationships between concepts.
- **Relate to the child's life:** Connect children's comments with their own personal experiences (at home, with family members, outside school activities).
- **Relate to the child's actions:** Use children's comments to help them reflect on their current actions (what they are doing).
- **Explain thinking:** Expand on children's comments and actions by describing how to think through the situation (self-talk).
- **Invite the child to think deeper:** Expand on children's comments by asking open-ended questions that support higher level thinking.

These expansion strategies provide opportunities to extend conversations with children while also stimulating their thinking and learning.





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

PRACTICING RESPONSES THAT EXPAND

In this activity, participants work individually or with a partner to practice responding to children's comments by using expansions.

HANDOUT

Distribute either the *Practicing Responses that Expand—Infants and Toddlers* or *Practicing Responses that Expand—Preschoolers* learning activity to each participant and review the directions.

DISCUSSION

- Ask volunteers to share examples of expansions.
- Discuss with the large group how each example might stimulate an extended conversation.
- Ask for an example from each of the six questions.





Length of video: Approximately 38 seconds

SLIDE 16: VIDEO: A WET SLEEVE, CONTINUED

NOTE

This video begins with and then continues the conversation presented on Slide 8. Choose either option A or B, based on the time allotted for this training and the needs of your audience.

You may want to remind participants that although some of the child's words are hard to understand, the teacher is able to follow the child and expand on her verbalizations.

Option A

Introduce the video.

This video shows an example of a teacher using expansions to engage a child in an extended conversation. The child uses gestures and words that are not always intelligible, but clearly convey her meaning. The teacher picks up on both.

VIDEO

DISCUSSION

Ask participants to share the key elements they noticed from this example.

Possible examples:

- When the child pointed to her sleeve and verbalized, the teacher said, "Is your sleeve a little bit wet? It is a little bit wet. Do you want it down? Down?"
- When the child continued to point at her wet sleeve and looked to the teacher, the teacher responded by asking, "What can we do about that?"
- When the child put her thumbs in her ears and moved her head back and forth, the teacher expanded by interpreting her gestures, "You like that part of the song when you put your thumbs in your ears, don't you?"

Option B

Complete the *Capturing Expansions Video Activity—Infants and Toddlers* learning activity (outlined below).





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

CAPTURING EXPANSIONS VIDEO ACTIVITY—INFANTS AND TODDLERS

In this activity, participants observe a teacher expanding on a child's actions and words during a conversation. The toddler's words are not always intelligible, but the teacher figures out what the child is trying to communicate.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Capturing Expansions Video Activity—Infants and Toddlers* learning activity to each participant.

Introduce the activity.

Participants watch the video, *A Wet Sleeve, Continued*, and take the perspective of an observer analyzing teacher-child conversations. They can use the handout to write down examples of what the teacher says to expand the conversation.

VIDEO

NOTE

The video can be shown more than once. Provide time at the end of the video to allow participants to complete their observations.

DISCUSSION

Ask participants to divide into small groups and share their observations and the feedback they would provide to the teacher.

In the large group, ask for volunteers to share highlights from their small group conversations.





Length of video: Approximately 1 minute and 47 seconds

SLIDE 17: VIDEO: GETTING TO SCHOOL, CONTINUED

NOTE

This video begins with and continues the conversation presented on Slide 9. For this slide, choose either option A or B, based on the time allotted for this training and the needs of your audience.

Option A

Introduce the video.

This video provides an example of a teacher using expansions to engage a child in an extended conversation during free play.

VIDEO

DISCUSSION

Ask participants to share the key elements they noticed from this example. Possible examples:

When the child responded, “Yeah,” to the teacher’s question, “Did you ride your bicycle?”, the teacher said, “You rode a bicycle here.”

The child said, “I crashed my truck.” The teacher expanded by saying, “So you crashed your orange truck.”

The child said, “I go fast... and I rrr-ooo, rrr.” The teacher expanded by saying, “You crashed into a building.”

Option B

Complete *Capturing Expansions Video Activity—Preschoolers* (outlined below).





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

CAPTURING EXPANSIONS VIDEO ACTIVITY—PRESCHOOLERS

This learning activity provides an opportunity for participants to observe a teacher expanding on a child’s words in the context of free play.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Capturing Expansions Video Activity—Preschoolers* learning activity to each participant.

Introduce the activity.

Participants watch the video, *Getting to School, Continued*, and take the perspective of an observer analyzing teacher–child conversations. They can use the handout to write down examples of what the teacher says to expand the conversation.

VIDEO

NOTE

The video can be shown more than once. Provide time at the end of the video to allow participants to complete their observations.

DISCUSSION

Ask participants to divide into small groups and share the feedback they would provide to the teacher.

In the large group, ask for volunteers to share highlights from their small group conversations.





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN

In this learning activity, participants plan how they intend to integrate this content into their classrooms/centers.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Developing an Action Plan* learning activity to each participant.

Introduce the activity.


This handout is designed to help participants plan opportunities to engage in extended conversations with infants, toddlers, and preschool children.

- Use the first column to select a time of day and location that is appropriate.
- In the second column, outline the topic of conversation and how this topic fits with a child's interests.
- In the third column, brainstorm meaningful questions that promote thinking based on the conversation topic.
- In the fourth column, plan how you can expand the conversation.

Provide time for participants to work alone or in small groups and then share their action plans. If time allows, bring the large group back together and have several volunteers share their plans.



SUMMARY



- Expand on children's actions, vocalizations, and words.
- Add more complex language.
- Add new information to support higher-level thinking.

SLIDE 18: SUMMARY

Now it's your turn to take what you've learned back to your classroom.

- Listen and pay attention to children's facial expressions, gestures, body language, vocalizations, and words to expand your conversations with them.
- Expand by adding more complex language in your responses.
- Expand on children's actions and words by adding new information to support higher-level thinking.

HANDOUT

Based on participant roles, distribute and review these handouts. Some handouts have more than one version, listed below.

- *Tips for Teachers* (young infant, toddler, and preschool versions): These tip sheets include simple, straightforward suggestions and reminders for extending conversations by using expansions.
- *Tools for Supervisors*: This is a guide to help supervisors focus and give feedback on conversations in classrooms. It provides several essential elements to capture extended conversations. Note: this tool corresponds with the five NCQTL conversation suites.
- *Tools for Teachers*: This tool supports teaching and learning by providing teachers with a visual reminder.
- *Helpful Resources* (infant/toddler version and preschool version): These two handouts list additional resources for engaging children in conversations.



**SLIDE 19:
CLOSING**



NCQTL

For more information, contact us at: NCQTL.UW.EDU or 877-731-0764

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SLIDE 19: CLOSING

Provide participants with NCQTL and EHS NRC contact information, and encourage them to visit the websites for additional resources.





OPTIONAL SLIDE: SAY HELLO

Note: This slide outlines the series of five in-service suites on Language Modeling and Conversations. The recommended placement for this overview slide is after Slide 3.

Expansions is one in a series of five in-service suites focused on engaging children in conversations. These five suites can easily be remembered by the phrase “Say **HELLO**.” This progression begins with teachers **H**aving conversations with children and then **E**xtending these conversations into thick verbal exchanges. Three strategies then outline how to create thick verbal exchanges: **L**isten and ask questions, **L**isten and expand, and **O**ffer new words. This in-service suite is focused on basic strategies for promoting conversations with children.

The five HELLO in-service suites include:

Have conversations.

- In-service suite: *Language Modeling and Conversations: Engaging Children in Conversations*

Extend into thick.

- In-service suite: *Language Modeling and Conversations: Thick and Thin Conversations*

Listen and ask questions.

- In-service suite: *Language Modeling and Conversations: Asking Questions*

Listen and expand.

- In-service suite: *Language Modeling and Conversations: Expansions*

Offer new words.

- In-service suite: *Language Modeling and Conversations: Novel Words*