



This guide walks you through presenting the **Language Modeling and Conversations: Novel Words** in-service suite. This in-service suite includes PowerPoint slides and supporting materials. Please remember to use and adapt these materials as needed for specific audiences.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Presenter PowerPoint slides (17)
- Optional Slide: *Say HELLO*
- Projector and audio equipment
- Learning Activities:
 - » *Conversations from Children's Books* (Required for this activity: Children's books with novel and interesting words)
 - » *Around the Classroom – Brainstorming Novel Words*
 - » *Developing an Action Plan*
- Optional Learning Activity (with slides):
 - » *Filling-In Children's Phrases*
- Tips for Teachers
- Tools for Teachers
- Tools for Supervisors
- Helpful Resources
- Flip chart or similar large paper for writing participant ideas

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- The purpose of this presentation is to provide participants with strategies for using novel words to engage in extended back-and-forth conversations with children.
- This is one in a series of five in-service suites called *Language Modeling and Conversations*.
- Learning activities offer participants opportunities to practice and plan for conversations that use novel and interesting words with children.
- HELLO is an overarching framework that links and organizes the five *Language Modeling and Conversations* in-service suites. HELLO is described in the optional slide, in *Tools for Teachers*, and in *Tools for Supervisors*, which appear in each of the five *Language Modeling and Conversations* in-service suites.
- Optional slides and learning activities are described in detail at the end of this document.

NOTE

For more specific information on promoting culturally and linguistically responsive conversations with children, refer to the *Revisiting and Updating the Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs Serving Children Birth to Five* at: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/Dual%20Language%20Learners/ecd/culture_and_diversity/manage_pub_00602a1_092305.html, and to the *Strategies for Supporting All Dual Language Learners*, a document developed by the National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness at: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/docs/dll-strategies.pdf>



SLIDE 1: NOVEL WORDS

Introductions: Begin the training by giving participants background information about yourself. Provide an opportunity for participants to introduce themselves (e.g., where they are working, their current roles, etc.).

Use an icebreaker that emphasizes using novel words and building vocabulary:

- In a small group or with the large group, ask participants to share an experience where they or a child used a new, interesting, or funny word.
- Prepare a selection of interesting words and put the words into a hat. Have participants draw one word out of the hat, define the word, and tell how to use it in the classroom or on a home visit.

Introduce the topic.

Novel Words focuses on incorporating new vocabulary words into everyday conversations with children.

Highlight two main points:

- Engaging children in extended conversations fosters language, cognitive development and social skills.
- The quality of what is said in the conversation greatly impacts these benefits.

How research supports these two statements:

- Follow up from the Meaningful Differences (Hart & Risley, 1995) research study supports this connection. Researchers found that both the number of words and the quality of the language children heard before their third birthday, impacted 3rd grade language and IQ test results. Quality was measured as both vocabulary (different kinds of words: nouns, adjectives, verbs) and complexity of sentences (sentences with 2 or more clauses, past tense verbs, or questions).
- The National Early Literacy Panel (2008) found that children's oral language as measured by grammar, children's ability to define words, listening comprehension, and vocabulary knowledge plays an important role in later literacy achievement.
- Oral language skills are critically important to reading and comprehension in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten.
- Additionally, research supports the important and active role teachers play in oral language development (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008).

SLIDE 1 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



It is critical for Head Start programs to focus on oral language skills. Engaging children in extended conversations that use novel words is one way to promote language development.

NOTE 

References for cited materials:

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

National Early Literacy Panel. (2008). *Developing early literacy: A scientific synthesis of early literacy development and implications for intervention*. Jessup, MD: National Center for Family Literacy. Retrieved from <http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/NELPReport09.pdf>



SLIDE 2: FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Introduce NCQTL.

Review the NCQTL framework for effective practice:

- The House structure supports 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 for effective everyday practice for all children.

This in-service suite brings us to the *foundation* of the House.

Using novel words in extended conversations supports engaging interactions between children and teachers in the classroom.

OBJECTIVES




- To understand how extended conversations with novel words benefit children
- To identify conversation opportunities that support introducing novel words
- To gain knowledge of resources that assist teachers in using novel words in conversations

SLIDE 3: OBJECTIVES

Outline objectives for the presentation:

- To understand how extended conversations that introduce novel words benefit children
- To identify conversation opportunities that support introducing novel words
- To discover resources that assist teachers in using novel words in conversations with children

WHAT ARE EXTENDED CONVERSATIONS?



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

That sounds interesting. Tell me more.

SLIDE 4: WHAT ARE EXTENDED CONVERSATIONS?

Define extended conversations: Rich back-and-forth exchanges that help children develop more complex language and thinking skills.

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

Back-and-forth exchanges: Conversations with equal verbal communication between the child and adult (taking turns).

OPTIONAL SLIDE PPT

Optional slide *Say HELLO*: This slide 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 conversation suites.

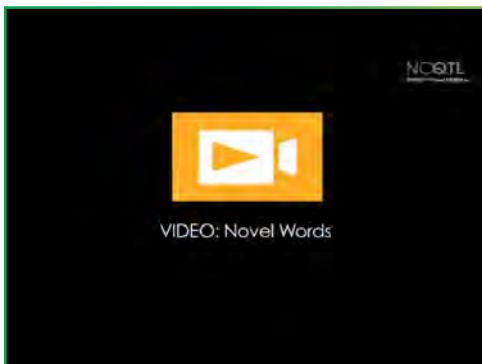
Presenter notes for this optional slide are provided at the end of this document.





SLIDE 5: CONVERSATIONS USING NOVEL WORDS

- Using novel words is one strategy for extending conversations with children.
- Embedding novel words into conversations provides children with exposure to new vocabulary related to their interests and activities.
- Intentionally introducing novel words into conversations with children is an effective way to promote language skills and learning.
- Children enrolled in Head Start programs often enter the classroom with limited vocabulary skills. Research by Hart and Risley (1995) suggests that children from low-income backgrounds know several thousand fewer words than their middle-income counterparts by the time they enter preschool. Therefore, everyone in early learning needs to intentionally focus on building vocabulary as soon as children enter early childhood programs.
- All conversations are not created equal in terms of developing children's language skills. Therefore, the teacher's role is critical in helping children develop rich and varied vocabulary by incorporating novel words in conversations.



Length of video: Approximately 3 minutes and 32 seconds

SLIDE 6: VIDEO: NOVEL WORDS

Introduce the video.

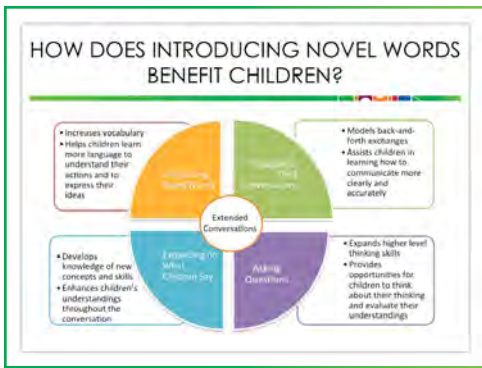
Inform participants that the video they will view demonstrates teachers using novel words in preschool classrooms. Have participants take note of the variety of novel words exchanged between the teachers and children.

VIDEO 

DISCUSSION 

Have participants Think-Pair-Share. First, give participants time to think about the video and how the teachers incorporate novel words into the conversation. Then, have participants pair with a partner and share their thoughts about the words heard in the video. If time allows, have participants share back with the large group.





SLIDE 7: HOW DOES INTRODUCING NOVEL WORDS BENEFIT CHILDREN?

Extended conversations benefit children's:

- Language development
- Cognitive development
- Social and emotional development

Extended conversations:

- **Provide** models of appropriate conversation skills
- **Support** higher-level thinking through meaningful questioning
- **Expand** on children's language to include new concepts and skills
- **Increase** children's vocabulary by introducing novel words.

This graphic illustrates the four elements of extended conversations:

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

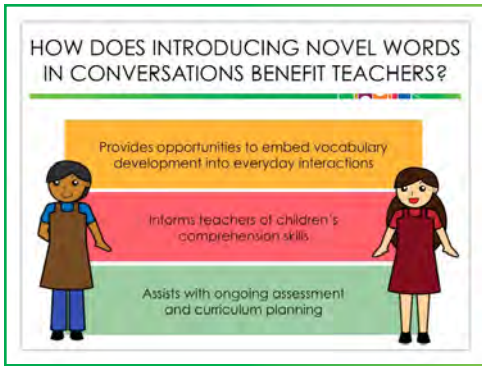
This presentation focuses on the fourth element, **introducing novel words**. Using novel words in conversations with children:

- Increases children's vocabulary
- Helps children learn more language to understand their actions and to express their ideas and feelings.

EMPHASIZE *

Using novel words helps expand children's vocabulary.





SLIDE 8: HOW DOES INTRODUCING NOVEL WORDS IN CONVERSATIONS BENEFIT TEACHERS?

- Provides opportunities to embed vocabulary development into everyday interactions
- Informs teachers of children's comprehension skills related to novel words
- Assists teachers with on-going child assessment and curriculum planning



SLIDE 9: INCORPORATING NOVEL WORDS INTO CONVERSATIONS

Conversations that incorporate novel words can occur with children throughout the day and across all classroom activities. Teachers need to load their conversations with novel words in order to intentionally expose children to more sophisticated language. Teachers can:

- Build children's language skills by exposing them to varied vocabulary.
- Use words that are interesting to children, words that pique their curiosity.
- Incorporate novel words that are meaningful to children. Children learn new words and definitions more easily when the words are attached to the child's actions, activities, and experiences.



SLIDE 10: FILL-IN CHILDREN'S PHRASES

NOTE: This animated slide is complex: The thumbnail to the left only shows final image; other images will appear before this one.

One strategy for incorporating novel words into conversations is to fill-in children's phrases. Replace empty phrases in the conversation with phrases full of rich vocabulary.

Empty-word phrases include words such as: "that thing," "over there," and "stuff." For example a child says: "That thing over there is moving." A teacher could respond by saying: "That caterpillar is crawling along the fence post in the garden." This response provides children with rich language to clarify their ideas and hear advanced vocabulary modeled.

Let's look at an example of a teacher filling-in a child's comments about her art work.

Child says, "I drew the mom and this one and this one and this one."
Teacher responds, "I see you drew the mom and then three other people. It looks like this could be your family."

Child says, "Yeah, and we are outside with all these things."
Teacher responds, "You are outside playing on the grass. And it looks like it is raining and sunny at the same time. Together the sun and rain must have created this rainbow. That must be a beautiful sight for your family."

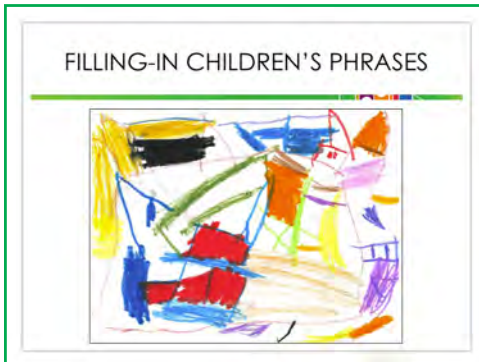
Child says, "And here's my letters."
Teacher responds, "And you wrote your name across the top. I see all the letters of your name, Avery. You also wrote the letters for the word *mom*."

This strategy works well for teaching new vocabulary as the modeled words represent familiar concepts directly connected to ideas the child is working to express. This provides an opportunity for meaningful exposure to these new words.

By restating and expanding on children's comments, teachers can "fill-in" children's phrases using specific words that are more sophisticated and phrases that are linguistically more complex.



OPTIONAL

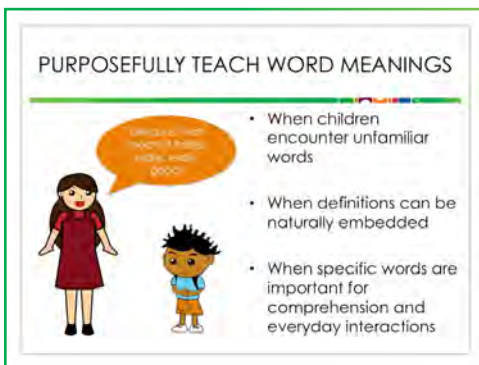


LEARNING ACTIVITY: FILLING-IN CHILDREN'S PHRASES

This learning activity provides additional practice for participants to fill-in children's phrases. Use the optional slides *Filling-In Children's Phrases* for this activity.

NOTE

Presenter notes for this optional learning activity are provided at the end of this document.



SLIDE 11: PURPOSEFULLY TEACH WORD MEANINGS

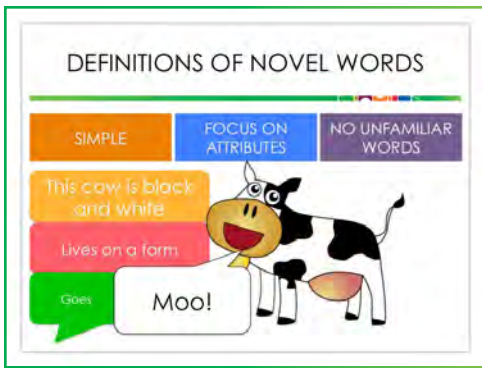
Within conversations, teachers can provide exposure to new words and naturally embed their contextual definitions. Teachers can:

- Explain word meanings when children encounter unfamiliar words. This is an effective strategy for building children's vocabulary, and teaching new concepts.
- Embed definitions of vocabulary into conversations when it can happen naturally in the context of when the word is used.
- Defining words is especially important when a word is needed for comprehension and when it occurs in a child's everyday interactions.

These embedded definitions should be simple and quick explanations that define the word in the context in which the word is being used. Using familiar, "child-friendly" words in your definition increases the likelihood that a child will understand the new word.

Storytelling and book reading are examples of opportunities where it is appropriate and beneficial to define unfamiliar words. When embedding definitions more explicitly and intentionally into storytelling or book reading, teachers support word learning beyond that provided by the story context or the picture clues.





SLIDE 12: DEFINITIONS OF NOVEL WORDS

NOTE: This animated slide is complex: The thumbnail to the left only shows final image; other images will appear before this one.

Caregivers can help enhance word-learning by providing developmentally appropriate definitions for children.

Make sure that definitions provided to children:

- Are simple
- Focus on descriptive attributes of objects
- Include only words that are familiar to the child.

EXAMPLE 1: PILOT

(Image of airplane appears.)

A pilot is a person

Who drives a plane

And takes all of the people on the plane where they need to go.

EXAMPLE 2: COW

(Image of cow appears.)

This cow is black and white

Lives on a farm

And goes "moo."

Additionally, caregivers can foster vocabulary and definition development through the use of riddles or guessing games:

- For example, "This is something that you wear when it is cold or raining, you zip it up, and it has a hood. What is it?"

OPTIONAL DISCUSSION

Ask participants if they have dictionaries (for both children and adults) in their classrooms. Have participants share ideas for how dictionaries can be used with children.

NOTE

The article *What Does "Apple" Mean? Learning to Define Words* by Marinellie (2001), referenced in *Helpful Resources*, provides additional information on children's development and understandings of definitions.





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

CONVERSATIONS FROM CHILDREN'S BOOKS

This learning activity provides an opportunity for participants to locate novel words, write “child-friendly” definitions of these words, and role play conversations with these words.

Have participants divide into small groups and provide each small group with one or two children’s books for this activity.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Conversations from Children’s Books* handout to each participant and review directions.

Provide time for participants to search through children’s books to identify novel and interesting words, time to write out simple definitions for these words, and opportunities to role play conversations in small groups using children’s books and introducing novel words.

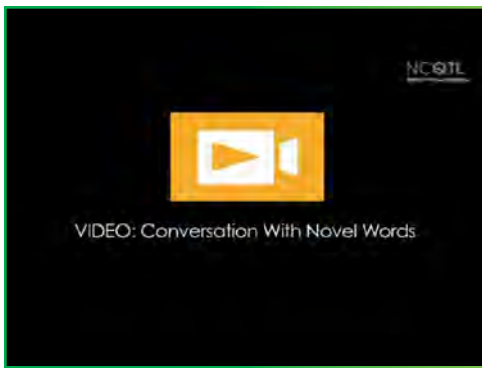
Example:

- Word: Reef
- Child-friendly definition: A reef is under the water; it can be very sharp and very big. It is like a big rock with holes in it where different animals, like fish, can live.
- Role play: “A reef is under the water and it is very big and sharp. The boat needs to go around the reef so it doesn’t get caught in it. See the boat going around the reef?”

If time allows, have several volunteers share their experiences.

NOTE

If you have the opportunity to contact participants in advance, you can ask participants to bring books from their classrooms for this activity. Participants can be encouraged to bring in books that they will read to children in the upcoming weeks. This allows them to integrate this content directly into their classroom practices.



Length of video: Approximately 1 minute and 30 seconds

SLIDE 13: VIDEO: CONVERSATION WITH NOVEL WORDS

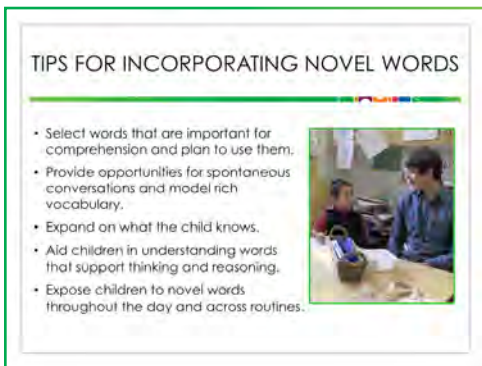
Introduce the video.

Inform participants that this video demonstrates a teacher using opportunities to introduce novel words in her extended conversation with a child. Have participants take note of the variety of novel words the teacher uses and how the child responds.

VIDEO 

DISCUSSION 

Ask participants to share their observations from this example.



SLIDE 14: TIPS FOR INCORPORATING NOVEL WORDS

- Select words that are important for comprehension and useful in everyday interactions. Then plan for opportunities to expose children to novel words in meaningful ways.
- Allow for spontaneous conversations with children and use novel words in these conversations. Always model rich vocabulary in your responses to children. For example, “That tall **tower** looks like a **skyscraper**. **Skyscrapers** are the **tallest** buildings in a city, they go up and up and up and up and look like they touch the sky!”
- Expand on what the child knows. Be aware of the words a child already understands and add novel words to represent familiar concepts. For example, if a child understands the meaning of yummy, he is likely to learn the word **delicious** through meaningful exposures to this word.
- Aid children in understanding words that support thinking and reasoning. For example, **relational words** help children compare, contrast, and revise their current understandings. Therefore, using novel words that express notions of quantity, time, location and size will assist children in understanding their actions and the world around them.
- Use all times of the day for conversations and exposing children to novel words, including: meal time, circle time, story time, free play experiences, and dramatic play.

NOTE 

Relational words are words that refer to relationships among people, objects or events. These include terms that refer to quantity (e.g., more, less), time (e.g., before, after), location (e.g., in, on, under, next to, behind, in back of, and in front of), size (e.g., big, little, long, short).





SLIDE 15: EXPANDING YOUR RESOURCES

Incorporating novel words into conversations takes planning and intentionality. There are several resources that can support teachers in identifying and intentionally incorporating novel words into conversations.

Identify novel words.

Brainstorm with colleagues:

- Find a group of colleagues and brainstorm novel words related to classroom projects or themes. Select several words that you think the children in your classroom would like, and include these in your daily conversations.

Search for novel words that children will encounter:

- Find novel words that children will be exposed to from the children's books in your classroom book area and daily read-alouds. Use these words in conversations.
- Read children's poems and listen to children's songs for novel words children will hear.
- Use a thesaurus to find alternative ways to say the same word. For example, when working at the water table, instead of always using the word *wet*, begin to incorporate words such as *soaked*, *drenched*, *damp*, *moist* into conversations with children. Or if you often find yourself using the term *interesting*, begin to incorporate alternative forms of this word such as: *engaging*, *exciting*, *pleasing*, *intriguing*, *fascinating*, *appealing*.

Plan ahead of time and define novel words:

- Teachers can plan to use novel words that fit with their current unit of study and create developmentally appropriate definitions for these words. This list can then be added to lesson plans and posted in the room for easy reference.

SLIDE 15 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Select classroom materials.

Select materials that expand children’s vocabulary such as: small vehicle sets (e.g., ambulance, crane, helicopter); people figures (e.g., astronaut, pediatrician, chef); everyday materials in dramatic play (e.g., colander, stethoscope, helmet). When children interact with these materials they learn the vocabulary and definition of these words through meaningful exposure in conversations with teachers and peers. Further, filling the room with these items reminds teachers to use these advanced words with children throughout the day.

Children’s Books: Select books for the classroom that have rich language and vivid illustrations. Children can learn unfamiliar vocabulary through listening to and having conversations about children’s books.

Provide visual reminders.

Post novel word lists in classroom centers. These lists provide a visual aid to the adults in the classroom and remind teachers to use interesting words with children in their conversations.

Display words: By using a word wall, word tree, or another form of graphic organizer, dedicate a wall space in the classroom to novel words which serve as a reminder for teachers, as well as a visual representation for children.

Use sticky notes: Identify novel words and write these words on sticky notes; place the notes around the classroom or on materials for lessons as a reminder to use these words in conversations with children during various activities and routines.

NOTE 

Be prepared with these examples, and invite participants to share their ideas.





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

AROUND THE CLASSROOM – BRAINSTORMING NOVEL WORDS

This learning activity offers participants an opportunity to identify and share examples of novel words for classroom learning centers.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Around the Classroom – Brainstorming Novel Words* handout to each participant and review directions.

- If you are meeting with teachers in their classroom, have them tour the learning centers and create a list of new and interesting vocabulary for each center. Remind them to use verbs and adjectives, as well as nouns.
- If you are not in a classroom use photographs of learning centers and complete the same brainstorming activity.
 - » Note: If you have the ability to contact participants prior to the training, you can ask them to bring pictures of the learning centers in their classrooms to use for this activity.

Have participants brainstorm in small groups to create their novel words lists.

DISCUSSION

- Have participants share their lists with other groups.
- Encourage participants to write down additional words on their handout.

NOTE

The goal is for participants to leave with many new and interesting words to bring back to their programs.



IT TAKES INTENTIONALITY!

- Provide intentional exposure to new words.
- Purposefully teach word meanings.
- Offer opportunities to use novel words.



SLIDE 16: IT TAKES INTENTIONALITY!

If teachers are intentional, conversations provide an opportunity for children to learn novel words.

Intentional conversations that support learning novel words:

- Provide exposure to new words
- Purposefully teach word meanings
- Offer opportunities to use novel words.

HANDOUT

Based on participant roles distribute and review handouts.

Tips for Teachers:

This tip sheet for teachers includes simple, straightforward suggestions and reminders for how to build extended conversations using novel words.

Tools for Supervisors:

This is a guide to focus supervisors on conversations in classrooms. It provides several essential elements to capture extended conversations. Note: this tool applies to the five NCQTL *Language Modeling and Conversations* in-service suites.

Tools for Teachers:

This visual serves as a reminder to support rich back-and-forth exchanges in the classroom.

Helpful Resources:

This is a list of additional resources related to the importance of engaging children in conversations.





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN

This learning activity provides an opportunity for participants to develop a plan for how they intend to integrate this content into their individual classrooms/centers.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Developing an Action Plan* handout to each participant.

Introduce the activity:

- This handout is designed to assist participants in planning opportunities to engage in extended conversations with children.
- The first column provides space to select a time of day and location that is appropriate for engaging in an extended conversation with a child or group of children.
- The second column provides space to outline the topic of conversation and how this topic fits with a child's or children's interests.
- The third column provides space to brainstorm meaningful questions that promote thinking based on the conversation topic.
- The fourth column provides space to plan how to expand the conversation.
- The final column provides space to list novel words that can be incorporated into the conversation.

Provide time for participants to work alone or together to plan meaningful opportunities to engage in extended conversations around their classrooms.

Have participants organize into small groups and share their action plans. If time allows, bring the large group back together and have several volunteers share their plans.

NOTE

If you are training in a classroom, provide time for participants to go to areas of the room and use materials as they plan conversation possibilities.





SLIDE 17: CLOSING

Provide participants with NCQTL contact information and encourage them to visit our website for additional resources on effective teaching practices.

Potential follow-up suggestions if you are working with participants who may need additional support in building vocabulary:

- Follow up with emails or phone calls.
- Review resource list and make recommendations.
- Suggest teachers pair with a more experienced teacher.
- Provide additional in-service suites or learning activities to offer more opportunities for practicing strategies.



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 4.

Novel Words is one in a series of five in-service suites focused on engaging children in conversations. These five in-service suites can easily be remembered by “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 the strategy of offering new words and introducing definitions into 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*



FILLING-IN CHILDREN'S PHRASES



FILLING-IN CHILDREN'S PHRASES



OPTIONAL SLIDES: LEARNING ACTIVITY: FILLING-IN CHILDREN'S PHRASES

The recommended placement for this learning activity is after Slide 10.

These slides provide the visual aid for the *Filling-In Children's Phrases* learning activity.

For this learning activity two slides with examples of children's work are provided. Have participants work with a partner to think through engaging a child in a conversation about one of these pieces of art work. Remind participants to fill-in children's statements and add novel words.

The following child statements can be used as conversation starters for either of these drawings, or participants can create their own.

- "Look at this."
- "It took really long to make all these things."
- "The sun is making these beautiful!"

NOTE

At first participants may extend the conversation by asking questions about the child's drawing. Work to help participants identify ways to extend the conversation by using varied vocabulary. It may be helpful to bring examples to the training in order to provide the participants with additional support if needed. Reviewing the example on Slide 10 of the presentation may also assist participants with this activity.