



CONVERSATION PRACTICE VIGNETTES

Work in small groups to practice engaging in “thick” conversations. Have one group member volunteer to take the perspective of the teacher while the other members take the perspective of the preschool children. Based on assigned vignettes, role-play a “thick” extended conversation and then respond to the discussion questions.

Vignette 1: One teacher with one child

It is center time and a teacher is sitting in the reading corner. A child approaches the teacher with a book about animals and hands it to the teacher without saying anything.

- How can the teacher respond to the child to begin an extended conversation?
- How could the teacher use the book to connect to the child’s interests and/or experiences?

Vignette 2: One teacher with two children

It is outdoor time and the class is enjoying a sunny spring morning on the playground. Two children are looking very intently at the ground where the edge of the pavement meets up with the damp grass. A teacher approaches the children. One child says, “Look, bugs,” pointing to a line of ants traveling across the edge of the pavement.

- How can the teacher respond to encourage a thick extended conversation?
- How can the teacher use the child’s observation as a teachable moment?

Vignette 3: One teacher with five children

It is morning snack time. The children are transitioning from free play to snack. As the children finish putting away materials, they wash their hands and gather at the snack table. One teacher is sitting at a snack table and five children have joined her. The children pass around pancakes, bananas, and milk family style. As one child puts a pancake on his plate, he shares, “We’ve made these before.”

- How can the teacher extend this child’s comment into a thick conversation with this group of children?
- How could the teacher connect this conversation back to the classroom?

Vignette 4: One teacher with the whole class

It is morning group time and the teacher is sharing the plan for the day with the children. As the teacher begins to introduce the new materials available in the writing center and science corner, a child exclaims, “Look outside, it is snowing!”

The children rush to the window.

- How can the teacher begin an extended conversation with this large group of children?
- How could the teacher build on children’s excitement, while also bringing the whole class back to large group?