

Conversation between mother and child

Psychology



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Part Background Information I conducted the observation for this assignment at a local preschool. I observed a two-year-old child interacting with his teacher in their classroom. I arranged for the visit through the preschool director. I recorded the conversation by writing it down as the teacher and child were interacting. The interaction began immediately upon the child's arrival at the classroom approximately 9 A. M. His mother dropped off the child at his classroom, but no conversations between the child and the mother were recorded.

Part 2: Results Throughout the conversation that I observed, the teacher always stayed within her role of the teacher. She continually expanded the conversation and asked questions regarding color, size and number, concepts that 2 year olds would be developing. The teacher also corrected grammatical mistakes without taking away the intensity and flow of the conversation. She let the child guide the topics of conversation and appeared to be genuinely interested in what the child was saying.

Part 3: Analysis The teacher began the conversation immediately upon the child entering the classroom. She asked the child how his/her was. The child immediately went to where the teacher was sitting at the table to show them a new bumblebee pillow pet that the child received from the Easter bunny. The observed conversation revolved around the topic of Easter. The teacher did not use "motherese" while talking with the child. She did not adapt her language to match that of the child's, but she did allow the child to determine the direction of the conversation. The conversation went from the Easter bunny and the pillow pet, to finding and coloring eggs, to candy and going to the park to have a picnic. The teacher used what could be considered advanced vocabulary in talking to the child. Her choice of words and sentence length did not seem to be adjusted according to how the

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child spoke. The child used simple, short sentences, but the teacher remained consistent in her speech. She did not “dummy down” because she was talking to a two year old. I consider this an important skill for teachers of two year olds since language development is a key part of their learning. The teacher included phrases such as, “soaking up the dye” and “Did the eggs float or sink?” It was not apparent if the child understood the concept of float and sink. I did have the opportunity to ask the teacher about this later and the teacher’s response was that the terminology was merely for exposure. She did not expect the child to be familiar, yet alone understand the concept of float and sink, but when the terms come up again, the child will have heard them before. The teacher did repeat the child’s sentences and phrases. The teacher would change the sentences when she repeated them to ensure they were grammatically correct. The child made some errors in terms of subject/verb agreement such as, “The eggs was turning colors”. The teacher would repeat, “The eggs were turning colors when you put them in the egg dye?” In this example, the teacher also expanded on what the child had said. This was also common practice for the teacher throughout the conversation. The child had very clear enunciation so there was no need for the teacher to repeat sentences more clearly. Other than grammatical errors, there was no need for the teacher to correct the child’s speech; however, the teacher did spend time reinforcing and expanding. In addition to repeating and expanding, the teacher also asked a significant number of questions during the conversation. The questions revolved around the color of the eggs, the number of eggs, what was eaten at the picnic and the child’s favorite parts of Easter. These questions served the purpose of keeping the child engaged in the conversation, adding length

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to the conversation. Many of the observations that I made are concepts that are covered in our textbook such as repeating phrases correctly and expanding on what a child is saying. Following the lead of the child in the conversation is also discussed in our textbook.