

CONCEPT: Encouraging Communication in the Centre

In social settings, communication is necessary for people to interact with one another and helps us understand what is happening around us. Eye contact and gestures are examples of non-verbal communication; speaking and making sounds are examples of verbal communication.



Consider supporting communication with the following strategies:

- *Develop adult-child relationships in the classroom.* When children feel safe and understood by the adults in their lives, they are often more able to have their needs met and more open to peer interaction.
- *Being at eye level* when communicating with children
- *Encourage eye contact when communicating.* If obtaining eye contact is difficult, consider shoulder-to-shoulder orientation and place a hand on the child's shoulder
- *Narrate or interpret what is happening around the children,* to provide information, vocabulary and increase understanding
- *When a less verbal child is observing other children who are expressing their needs or emotions, narrate the scene to help him/her understand what is happening*
 - i.e. "Jenny, you are looking at Bob and Joe laughing together. They are making silly faces in the mirror and are having fun." or "You see Bob crying. He dropped his snack on the floor. He said he is worried he won't have anything else to eat. The teacher is helping. Bob stopped crying and is feeling better."
- *'See' and 'Wonder':* notice what is happening and guess what is happening,
 - i.e., "I see you're pulling Bob's arm. I wonder if you want to ask him to play."
- *Offer verbal cues:* Provide tips to children on how to ask. "You can say, 'Bob', come and play?"
- *If the child is reluctant to speak, ask if you can help,*
 - i.e. "I wonder if you would like me to help you ask Bob to play?" "Bob, Jenny wants to ask you to play."
- *Remember that predictability in play and in environment reduces anxiety for children who find change difficult.* Children who are feeling anxious may have a harder time communicating their needs. Being sensitive to shifts in your program, and preparing children can help reduce anxiety.

Things to consider:

- Our ability to 'let go' of where we perceive a child should be in terms of verbal communication and meeting them where they are at is one of the first steps in supporting the child's needs.
- Recognizing that communication may look different for each child helps us to develop appropriate and meaningful communication goals for children.

Please do not alter or reproduce without prior consent from
The PACE Program (604) 266-3141. THANK YOU!

Compliments of The PACE Program



Working together to foster
emotional well being
in our community through
connection, support and education.
www.thepaceprogram.ca