

ADULT-CHILD INTERACTION STRATEGIES

The developmental appropriateness of an early childhood program is most apparent in the interaction between adults and children.

- National Association for the Education of Young Children

The biggest enemy to learning is the talking teacher.

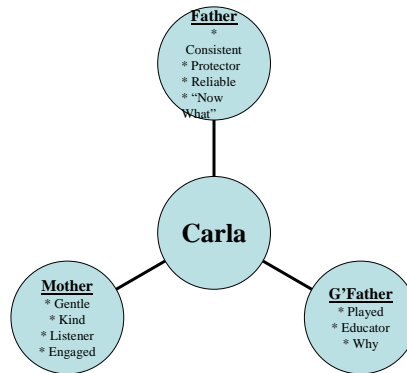
- John Holt

AGENDA

- Opening Activity
 - Personal Board of Directors
- Central Ideas
 - Contrasting Climates for Children
 - Experiencing the Elements of Support
 - Play and Conversation
- Application
 - Applying the Elements of Support to Everyday Situations
- Next Steps

Opening Activity

Personal Board of Directors



Central Ideas

Contrasting Climates for Children

CLIMATES FOR CHILDREN

- Laissez-Faire
- Supportive
- Directive

Central Ideas

Contrasting Climates for Children cont.

Laissez-Faire Climate	Supportive Climate	Directive Climate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Children are in control most of the time, with adults as bystanders who provide supervision. •Adults intervene to respond to requests, other information, restore order. •Curriculum content comes from children's play. •Adults highly value children's play. •Adults use various approaches to child management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Children and adults have control. •Adults observe children's strengths, form authentic partnerships with children, support children's intentional play. •Curriculum content comes from children's initiatives. •Adults highly value children's active learning. •Adults take a problem-solving approach to social conflict. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Adults are in control. •Adults give directions and information. •Curriculum content comes from learning objectives set by adults. •Adults highly value drill and practice for children. •Adults use correction and separation as predominant child management strategies.
Advantages vs. Disadvantages	Advantages vs. Disadvantages	Advantages vs. Disadvantages

Central Ideas

Contrasting Climates for Children cont.

- **REPORT ON LEADERSHIP STYLES**
 - Describe leader's style and the strategies used during the activity.
 - What are your feelings about the leader's style and strategies?
 - Do you like the final product? Why or why not?
 - Describe any group dynamics you observed during the activity.
 - What would the implications be for children in this type of setting?

Central Ideas

Experiencing the Elements of Support

- Supportive Strategies
 - “Keep Away” vs. “Toss and Catch”
 - For a few moments play a game of “Keep Away.” One person’s goal is to try to get the ball away from the other person, whose goal is to maintain possession of it.
 - Now switch to “Toss and Catch.”

□ **SHARE CONTROL**

Central Ideas

Experiencing the Elements of Support cont.

- Target Practice
 - Locate a challenging target to hit or toss ball into. As you take turns trying to hit the target, tell the person who is throwing the ball what she is doing wrong and how to correct the errors.
 - Continue with target practice, but use support and encouragement.

□ **FOCUS ON STRENGTHS**

Central Ideas

Experiencing the Elements of Support cont.

- Sharing Information About Balls
 - Take turns giving each other a lecture about the ball.
 - Now talk together about ball games you have played in the past.

□ FORM AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Central Ideas

Experiencing the Elements of Support cont.

- Rolling Balls
 - Make an inclined plane. As one person holds the paper, the other person rolls the ball down the plane.
 - Sit opposite of each other, roll the ball back and forth between you.

□ SUPPORT CHILDREN'S PLAY

Central Ideas

Experiencing the Elements of Support cont.

- Fixing the Ball
 - Flatten ball, the other person scolds and shames you and tells you that since you have ruined the ball you won't be able to play with it anymore.
 - Together figure out a way to repair the ball. Make up a new game and play it together.

- **ADOPT PROBLEM-SOLVING APPROACH TO SOCIAL CONFLICT**

Central Ideas

Play and Conversation

TYPES OF PLAY

- Exploratory Play
- Constructive Play
- Pretend Play
- Games

APPLICATION

□ **Scenario One**

Your classroom is located in an elementary school and children must travel through several corridors to get to the outdoor play area. How might you **share control** with your young learners on their daily journey?

□ **Scenario Two**

Kyle has spent most of work time at the water table, and at cleanup time wants to empty out – a process that requires more than one person. How might you use a **problem-solving approach** with Kyle?

NEXT STEPS!

□ **"NOW WHAT?"**

□ One: _____

□ Two: _____

□ Three: _____

SUPPORTIVE INTERACTION STRATEGIES

- **Offer children comfort and contact.**
 - **Look for children in need of comfort and contact.**

Children who are expressing anxiety or discomfort, watching others play, moving rapidly from one material to another, asking frequently for adult acknowledgement, or needing ongoing assistance in starting and continuing their plan are often in need of this type of interaction.
 - **Offer reassuring physical contact.**

Children sometimes need a hand to hold, a lap to curl up in, reassuring arms around them, or just an adult's calm presence nearby.
 - **Offer simple acknowledgement.**

Occasionally all that is needed is an acknowledgment of children's efforts – a simple nod and a smile, or a comment such as "I see" that shows you notice their efforts.

- **Participate in children's play.**
 - **Look for natural play openings.**

Generally, it is more natural and less disruptive to join children's exploratory play, pretend play, or games, rather than their constructive play.
 - **Join children's play on the child's level.**

This may mean squatting, kneeling, sitting, and occasionally even lying on the floor. This way, children are not "looking up" to you, and you are not "looking down" on children.
 - **Play in parallel with children.**

This strategy can be effective during exploratory play, as the adult plays near the child using the same materials in the same or similar manner.
 - **Play as a partner with children.**

This works well with children involved in pretend play or games, with adults functioning as equals and followers.
 - **Refer one player to another.**

This enables children to recognize each other's strengths, regard each other as valuable resources, use their abilities for the benefit of others, and play cooperatively.
 - **Suggest new ideas within ongoing play situations.**

Adults may also wish to challenge young children's thinking and reasoning to expand the breadth of their play and, consequently, their understanding.

 - **Offer suggestions within the play theme.**
 - **Address the role person rather than the child.**
 - **Respect the child's reaction to your idea.**

- **Converse with children.**
 - **Look for natural opportunities for conversation.**
 - **Join children at their level for conversation.**
 - **Respond to children’s conversational leads.**
When adults are silent yet attentive, and listen patiently and with interest to ongoing conversations, children will likely address them directly or make the first move toward involving them in conversation.
 - **Converse as a partner with children.**
Pass conversational control back to children at every opportunity:
 - Stick to the topic the child raises.
 - Make comments that allow the conversation to continue without pressing the child for a response.
 - Wait for the child to respond before taking another turn.
 - Keep comments fairly brief.
 - **Ask questions responsively:**
 - **Ask questions sparingly.**
Too many adult questions can dampen conversation with young children, by keeping the adult in control of the conversation and forcing the child to respond to adult’s agenda. However, the right kind of adult questions – those that are responsive to children’s play interests – can sometimes stimulate a rich dialogue with children, if they are used sparingly.
 - **Relate questions directly to what the child is doing.**
Questions that discourage conversation tend to be questions about facts the questioner already knows (What color is that? Which board is longer? Is that a house?), or questions unrelated to the situation at hand (Child is coloring. Adult asks, “How is your new baby brother?”). On the other hand, when questions are asked out of genuine curiosity and relate directly to what the child is doing, they may stimulate discussion.
 - **Ask questions about the child’s thought process.**
Among the best kinds of questions are those that encourage children to describe their thinking. For example:
 - How can you tell?
 - How do you know what?
 - What do think made that happen?
 - How did you get the ball to...?
 - What do you think would happen if...?

- **Encourage children's problem solving.**
 - **Look for children involved in problem situations.**
 - **Allow children to deal with problems and conflicting viewpoints.**
Practice restraint – avoid interfering prematurely!
 - **Sit down with children.**
This gives children more time to work things out on their own.
 - **Give children time to use their own problem-solving skills.**
Wait until children ask for assistance, or until they have made an attempt at a solution and seem about to abandon the effort.
 - **Refer one child to another.**
Whenever possible, refer children to other children who have the skills to help them.
 - **Listen to conflicting view points.**
Rather than keeping children from arguing, encourage children to elaborate on their views.
 - **Interact with rather than manage children.**
Adults who *manage* (pass out instructions and warnings) rather than *interact* (play and converse as partners) prevent children from confronting and working with child-size problems.
 - **Assist matter-of-factly with unresolved conflicts.**
When intervention is necessary, adults should be patient, respectful, and nonjudgmental.
 - **Elicit, listen to, and acknowledge children's descriptions of problems.**
 - **Encourage children to talk with one another about the situation they are experiencing.**
 - **Interpret for less articulate children when necessary.**
 - **Help children generate alternatives.**