



Follow the Child's Lead in Conversations

Following the child's lead means *letting* the child lead. And letting the child lead means waiting for up to 3-4 seconds to give the child a chance to start a conversation. They may start the conversation with a sound, a point, or by telling you something. Then, you can follow their lead and say something in response, making sure it is related to the child's interests. Here are some fun things to try:

Play Time

When in doubt, don't hesitate to imitate. For example, if a child is pushing a car across the floor, get your own car and follow their lead by pushing it across the floor too while you make a comment like, "My car is going fast too!" If the child makes a sound (e.g., "vroom"), make that sound too.

Daily Activities

While drawing with a child, wait for them to tell you something about what they are drawing. Then follow their lead by making an enthusiastic comment, followed by an open-ended question. For example, if they say, "I drew a snake," you can reply with, "Wow, what a long snake! Where does your snake live?"



On the Go

While on a walk, wait for the child to notice something and give them a chance to say something about it. Then follow their lead and make a thought-provoking comment about it. For example, if a child points out a flock of birds, respond with, "That's a lot of birds! I wonder why those birds stay together in a big group instead of flying alone."

Book Reading

While sharing a book, don't worry about reading it from start to finish. If a child decides to turn back to a previous page, go with the flow and make an enthusiastic comment about whatever the child finds interesting. You might say, "There's the gorilla again! He's eating a banana. Yummy!"



Notes