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VISIBLE LEARNING
in Early Childhood

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TIPS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLAYFUL LEARNING

As you intentionally plan your language for creating rich verbal inquiry in playful learning, consider these guidelines and tips:

- Start with familiar, informal language and contexts so that children can show what they know. Use this as a springboard to connect to formal vocabulary and phrases.

- While playful learning involves a lot of adult interaction, it can still fit in child-centered classrooms where choice and hands-on tasks capitalize on children's intrinsic motivation to play.

- Remember that outdoor play should be playful learning too. Rather than thinking of outdoor play as recess, reframe this time as another choice time or centers time where you can be a conversational partner and a language facilitator.

- Songs, poems, and retellings are effective ways to engage children in rehearsal and memorization as well as spaced practice of new vocabulary and ideas.

- As you plan your language, be sure to be intentional with your questions. Plan them. Write them down and carry them with you as you interact with the children.

- Organize vocabulary instruction into hierarchical categories or taxonomic relationships, like Ms. Demchak, Ms. Bullock, and Mr. Heaton did. These meaningful groupings of words focus on relationships and conceptual understanding and they support memory.

- Adult interaction is key to making play a learning opportunity. One of your ways of interacting can be to facilitate peer interactions too. This develops multiple children's language simultaneously and supports socioemotional growth.

- Connect language to multiple and multisensory representations using concrete materials, images, actions, and symbols as well as song, dance, movement, rhyme, and rhythm.

- Encourage children to interact with you and their peers in their home languages. Their growth in home language vocabulary and comprehension supports this growth in English too.