

A Closer Look at Habits of Mind: Communicates ideas and emotions clearly and appropriate to the setting

Traits: The child ...

- Uses words and gestures in settings to successfully communicate thoughts and emotions
- Uses materials from the arts and sciences to express thoughts and emotions
- Conveys a message/idea/story so that others can understand it
- Listens and responds to the messages/ideas/stories of others in a manner appropriate to the setting
- Expresses satisfaction stemming from a discovery, accomplishment, interaction, or relationship
- Engaging in conversation and interacts comfortably with others



Supporting the Emergence of Communication

Ask yourself ...

- How might I welcome and encourage diverse forms of communication in my learning community? Where are there opportunities to introduce or increase access to multiple forms of communication. How might I notice and celebrate successful communication however it occurs?
- What happens when I authentically honor the communication that children bring to the program? For instance, might a particular gesture used by a child become THE gesture used to refer to a concept – e.g. *flexibility* (an undulating arm) or *idea* (index finger tapping top of head)? Could words from other community languages be adopted as THE way to communicate with all children (e.g. saying, *Vamos afuera!* before adding, *Let's go outside!*)?
- What interpretations will emerge when I ask children to try to figure out what their classmate is communicating? *It looks like your friend is trying to communicate about your block tower. What message does it seem like he wants to share?*
- What could I read? Wordless pictures books can provide opportunities for children to communicate with words and gestures (pointing, eye contact, facial expressions) the “*What's happening?*” of the story. Look for Mercer Mayer's classic *Boy, Dog, and Frog*. Or, the hamster adventures of Peggy Rathman's *10 Minutes til Bedtime*. Or, the social emotional learning possibilities of *I Walk with Vanessa*.

Communicating: Language to notice, spotlight, and reflect!

I am noticing that you ...(traits)

- are using words, materials, images, and/or gestures to communicate ideas/feelings
- have an idea that you want to share
- are listening and responding to ideas/messages/stories of others
- finding joy in what you are discovering
- are letting others know what you are thinking/feeling

I see you listening to your friend's words.

I noticed you helped your friend understand by pointing to what you wanted.

I can tell that you are listening because _____(behavior).

I hear you, friend.

Your face is telling me that you might be feeling _____. You can say, "I'm _____."

What words (what gestures) show our friends care?

How can you let your friend know what is going on in your heart/brain/body with your words?



Notes on Observing and Assessing Children's Expression of Communicating Ideas and Emotions



It is important to take care that Communicating Ideas and Emotions does not become conflated with complying with adults' directions to *be quiet*. This habit reflects a focus on children connecting with each other, sharing ideas, and resolving differences through communication. Sometimes, during a discovery or joyful exchange, communication will be loud and exuberant.

Additionally, verbal language is only one way that you may see children communicating their ideas and emotions.

They may also use materials or drawings, gestures or other communication systems to convey their thoughts and understandings. Challenge yourself to notice the ways in which children are expressing themselves without language. For instance, what understandings of the world are children communicating through their interactions with materials across the environment?