

# Pre-K Teach & Play Practice Point

## Universal Strategies

### **ASKING QUESTIONS**

Asking questions is a cognitive-based instructional strategy that is used to build children's critical thinking skills by utilizing a series of question taxonomies that target different cognitive levels, and then sequencing and/or patterning questions in a way that allows the answer to each question to build onto the next. Asking questions is one of the most common instructional practices that, when used to do more than check understanding, can support children's ability to synthesize new information with existing schemas, encourage curiosity, increase motivation, and improve problem-solving. Asking questions should not be used solely to assess a child's learning, but rather should be utilized intentionally, mindfully, and frequently to support children in developing higher-order cognitive skills.

### **BRAINSTORMING**

Brainstorming is a cognitive-based instructional strategy that is typically planned by an adult who leads a child or group of children to identify most/all possible solutions or answers to a specific problem, barrier, challenge, or situation. Use of brainstorming stimulates creative and critical thinking through interactions that are conversational, bi-directional, balanced, and promote child engagement. Brainstorming can be used with individual or groups to collectively generate new ideas. Brainstorming is not a strategy that should be used to evaluate or judge children's responses, rather the teacher is charged with helping children generate responses and accepts a wide range of responses delivered verbally and/or non-verbally.

### **NOVELTY**

Novelty is a cognitive-based instructional strategy that is used to garner children's interest by introducing topics, concepts, and/or materials in a way that is unique, new, and/or unusual, but not necessarily surprising. Use of novelty is designed to engage children in the learning process by capturing their attention in a way that differs from the usual routine or activity, therefore increasing the likelihood that new learning will be retained and connections with previous knowledge or understanding will be made. Novelty should not be used to shock children or cause them to be fearful; rather, Novelty simply ensures that children do not tire, bore, or shut down due to the predictability of the daily routines and activities.

## **PARALEL-TALK**

Parallel-talk is an indirect adult-led instructional strategy used by an adult to describe what the child is doing and/or likely thinking/feeling using academic, technical, or everyday language. Adults provide rich examples of vocabulary, including nouns, adjectives, and verbs, as well as higher-order thinking processes such as problem-solving as they describe the child's actions and/or probable thoughts/feelings. Use of parallel-talk helps children to make the connection between vocabulary and their own actions, thoughts, and feelings. When adults use parallel-talk, children are provided opportunities to hear about their surroundings and their actions, and adults can teach the correct labels for the actions and objects a child is currently seeing or playing with. When children hear more words, hear how words are used, and have the opportunity to share or clarify their needs and wants, they will be more likely to communicate their needs and wants spontaneously. Parallel-talk is not an ongoing monologue used by the adult, but rather it is adult speech that promotes continued engagement and joint attention by pausing and observing as appropriate to match the child's pace, temperament, and interest in learning about the labels and vocabulary specific to what they are doing, thinking, or feeling.

## **SELF-TALK**

Self-talk is an indirect adult-led instructional strategy used to describe what he/she is doing, thinking, or feeling using academic, technical, or everyday language. Adults provide rich examples of vocabulary, including nouns, adjectives, and verbs, as well as higher-order thinking processes such as problem-solving or metacognition as they describe their actions, thoughts, and feelings. Use of self-talk helps children to make the connection between vocabulary and adult actions, thoughts, and feelings. When adults self-talk, children are provided opportunities to hear how we talk about our surroundings and our actions, and adults can teach the correct labels for the actions and objects a child sees or plays with. When children hear more words, hear how words are used, and see how people communicate their needs and wants, they will be more likely to communicate their needs and wants. Self-talk is not an ongoing monologue used by the adult, but rather it is adult speech that promotes continued engagement and joint attention by pausing and observing as appropriate to match the child's pace, temperament, and interest in learning about what the adult is doing, thinking, or feeling.

## **UNEXPECTED SITUATIONS**

Unexpected situations are adult-led instructional strategies used to promote children's interest and engagement in the given activity or routine. Adults plan and arrange the learning environment purposefully to stimulate children's engagement, communication, and motivation to interact with the people and materials. The use of unexpected situations as an instructional strategy will likely increase a child's motivation and interest to maintain joint attention and engagement in planned learning activities and routines. Unexpected situations can include substituting predictable materials, words, or actions. For example, purposefully forgetting the words to a familiar song, purposefully causing something that should work to fail, or purposefully handing out puppets when children asked for playdough. Unexpected situations are not necessarily new situations, unpredictable situations, or non-preferred situations for the child.