

## Rhode Island Early Learning Standards



### Strategies that Support Children in the Areas of Language Development and Communication

#### Listening and Understanding

- Add storytelling props to the library area for acting out original and familiar stories<sup>1</sup>
- Model good listening such as maintaining eye contact and expressing interest in the speaker.<sup>2</sup>
- Play listening games with children. For example, place items in a mystery box for children to identify from clues, and play matching sounds, lotto, and treasure hunt games where children must listen to and follow a series of directions. Games such as “Simon Says” offer opportunities for children to learn specific concepts.<sup>3</sup>
- Build children’s auditory discrimination skills by playing games where the same/different sounds of words are highlighted.<sup>4</sup>
- Provide new and different experiences that expand receptive vocabulary like field trips, visitors, and objects to explore. Afterward, have children describe their experiences in their own words to see what they understand and what new words they’ve learned.<sup>5</sup>

#### Speaking and Communicating

- Engage in one-to-one, extended conversations with individual children about their personal experiences or events in the program.<sup>6</sup>
- Respond to children’s speech with expansions and questions that point out causes and consequences.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Diane Trister Dodge, Laura Colker & Cate Heroman. *Creative Curriculum for Preschooler*. Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, 2002, 284.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Head Start Bureau. *The Head Start Leader’s Guide to Positive Child Outcomes: Strategies to Support Positive Child Outcomes*. (Washington, D.C September 2003), 35.

<sup>3</sup> *The Head Start Leader’s Guide*, 39.

<sup>4</sup> *The Head Start Leader’s Guide*, 39.

<sup>5</sup> *The Head Start Leader’s Guide*, 39.

<sup>6</sup> *The Head Start Leader’s Guide*, 36.

<sup>7</sup> *The Head Start Leader’s Guide*, 36.

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- Introduce new words, including the kinds of multi-syllable words that are not typically part of a preschooler’s vocabulary. Use new words numerous times and observe to see if children begin to use them appropriately.<sup>8</sup>
- Engage children in conversations about events, experiences, or people that are beyond the here and now—events from the past, the future, or children’s imaginations (in other words, decontextualized speech). Such interaction requires children and adults to use more complex and varied vocabulary in explanations, descriptions, narratives, dialogue, and pretend talk.<sup>9</sup>
- Talk about a book you are going to read to children before reading it, asking them to predict from the title or cover what the story will be about or what might happen next.<sup>10</sup>
- Use “information” talk to describe what children are doing when playing, and invite their comments. For example, say “Dwayne, you are putting lots of blocks on your tower. I wonder how you’ll keep it from tipping over.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *The Head Start Leader’s Guide*, 36.

<sup>9</sup> *The Head Start Leader’s Guide*, 36.

<sup>10</sup> *The Head Start Leader’s Guide*, 36.

<sup>11</sup> Ann S. Epstein, *The Intentional Teacher: Choosing the Best Strategies for Young Children’s Learning* (Washington: NAEYC, 2007) 27.