



MEALTIME  
CONVERSATIONS

## How Old We Are

Converse with children about their ages and their siblings' ages. Repeat children's words, make comments, and then pause (rather than asking lots of questions) to encourage more language from the children.

*Adult: Samantha, you said you are four, but your brother is just an infant. (Pause.)*

*Samantha: Yes, he's little.*

*Micah: My baby's bigger. She's two.*

*Adult: Two is getting bigger. So your baby is a toddler now and is older than Samantha's baby. (Continue to converse with children.)*

## Vocabulary Words

**teenager:** someone 13 to 19 years old

**toddler:** a child who is learning how to walk, usually between one and three years old

## If You Were a Bird...

Encourage children to imagine that they are a particular animal and to talk about what that would be like. For example, you might ask one or two of the following questions:

- *Suppose you could fly like a bird. Where would you fly?*
- *Imagine that you were as tall as a giraffe. What would you see?*
- *If you could be any animal in the zoo, what would you be? What kind of habitat would you live in? A habitat is where an animal lives.*

## Vocabulary Words

**airborne:** in the air

**habitat:** where an animal lives

**imagine:** to picture something in your mind

## If We Went to School at Night...

Ask the children to imagine if they went to school in the evening instead of during the day. Let them know that *evening* is another word for *night*.

Use one or two of the following questions to keep the conversation going:

- *What are some things we would do differently if we went to school at night?*
- *What would we see outside?*
- *What would you wear to school?*
- *What would we eat at mealtime?*

## Vocabulary Words

**creature:** an animal or a person

**moonlight:** the glow from the moon

**nocturnal:** active at nighttime

**schedule:** a plan of when certain things will happen

## Describing What I'm Eating

Converse with children about what they notice about the food they're eating. As appropriate, use new vocabulary words during the conversation. For example, you might say,

*Adult: I noticed that my carrot makes a crunchy sound when I eat it. I'm wondering what you are eating that makes a crunchy noise. (Pause.)*

*Brianna: Apples!*

*Adam: My pretzels.*

*Adult: Pretzels also make a crackling sound when you eat them. What else do you eat that makes a crackling sound?*



## Vocabulary Words

**appetite:** a strong feeling of wanting to eat

**nibble:** to have a small bite of something

**taste bud:** one of the bumps on your tongue that helps you taste

**texture:** the way something feels when you touch it

## Things Outside

Talk with the children about things they would find outside but not inside (e.g., swings, rain, trees, worms, cars).

Support children's thoughts by repeating and restating what they share to acknowledge their contributions. For example, you might say,

- *Your mom has a blue van, but your dad's car is black.*
- *You found a rock that glistened in the sun — that means it sparkled when the sun's rays shone on it.*

## Vocabulary Words

**nature:** all the living things of the world, like plants and animals

**neighborhood:** a group of houses or buildings in a particular area

**observe:** to watch carefully

**vehicle:** a machine that drives people and things around, such as a car, bus, or bicycle

## Imagining a New Ending

Expand on a favorite book, song, or chant.

Use the characters and/or events as a starting point and ask the children to imagine what might happen next and/or what would happen if one of the characters, events, or the ending were different. For example, in reference to *Roller Coaster* by Marla Frazee, you might say,

*Suppose the little girl decided not to ride the roller coaster. What do you think she would do at the amusement park?*

## Vocabulary Words

**anticipate:** to expect or think something might happen

**describe:** to talk about something in detail

**predict:** to guess what might happen in the future

**recite:** to say the words of something from memory

## If I Were the Teacher...

Encourage children to imagine that they are the teacher. Provide follow-up prompts/questions as illustrated here:

Adult: *If you were the teacher for a day, what would you do? (Pause.)*

Ahmed: *Swing!*

Adult: *It sounds like you'd have class on the playground. Rosie, Ahmed would like to be on the swings. What would you like to do? (Pause.)*

Rosie: *Eat ice cream.*

Adult: *I wonder which flavor of ice cream you'd like to eat.*

## Vocabulary Words

**decision:** a choice you make

**occupation:** a person's job

**protect:** to keep safe

## Silly Rhyming Mistakes

Invite children to join you in saying sentences in which a rhyming word is substituted for the correct word. For example, you might say,

*I see Cali is wearing a striped girt today.*

Emphasize the mistake as you read the sentence and ask children what the correct word might be. Acknowledge the children's correction, and repeat the rhyming words (e.g., *Girt rhymes with shirt*).

Model several sentences so children get the idea of the game.