



## Interaction Tips

*Prepared by the Early Childhood Consultants at Child Care Aware® of North Dakota*

One of the key elements to providing high quality care to children is to have high quality interactions. These interactions happen numerous times each day and between many different people such as between two children, two adults and between children and adults. All these interactions have an impact on how children learn and develop. The Environment Rating Scales measure the interactions in the following ways.

- Program is set up to avoid conflicts between children (duplicate toys available, smooth transitions, not too crowded)
- Because children copy what they see adults doing, providers and staff need to model good social skills for children by being responsive, polite, interested, and cooperative with people the children see them interacting with
- Peer interactions are positive and there are opportunities for children to work together and activities are set up to encourage this. (ie: blowing bubbles for a small group of infants, older children reading to younger children, a large paper for all to paint on, or all children working toward a common goal such as clean up time)
- Timeout used rarely or never and NEVER with children under 2
- Attention is given for positive behavior and when children are interacting positively with each other
- Provider and staff help children understand effects of their actions and help them use communication to solve problems (“He didn’t step on your hand to hurt you, Evie. He was trying to sit with us. Let me see your fingers. Look at Evie’s finger, Jon. You stepped on it by mistake. Would some ice help?”)
- Provider and staff respond sympathetically to children, (there is no ignoring and their response is more than “you’re fine”). They are relaxed, use calm/pleasant voices, show respect to children, and show warmth through verbal and physical contact with children
- Provider and staff show an awareness of the whole group when working with one or two children
- Encouragement and support is provided
- Provider and staff talk to children about their feelings, ideas, intentions and actions (feeling angry when someone takes your toy, being helpful and kind to your friends)
- There is a balance of listening and talking activities as age appropriate – there are many back and forth turn taking conversations from “baby conversation” to encouraging older children to explain their reasoning during both free play and routines times
- Provider and staff use exact words for objects, people, and places – instead of it, this, his, hers, there. For example: the red truck, Olivia’s blue ball, please put the truck on the bottom shelf. (Someone listening would know what is being talked about even if they could not see the interaction.)
- Talk is encourage during both free play and routine times
- Provider and staff ask questions, but do not “quiz” children – simple for younger children (what or where) and more complex for older children (why or how). For more information on asking children open ended questions see tip sheet titled, Open Ended Questions, located at <http://ndchildcare.org/projects/bright>
- Provider and staff expand on ideas presented by older children and link their communication to written language
- A wide variety of age appropriate books are used with children multiple times a day