

Teachers play a critical role in developing language-rich classroom environments. Here are a few practical ways in which teachers can support and engage children in conversations.

## SET THE STAGE:

- 1) Get down on the child's level.
- 2) Listen to what the child says.
- 3) Match the tone of the conversation to the child's affect.
- 4) Take turns in talking.

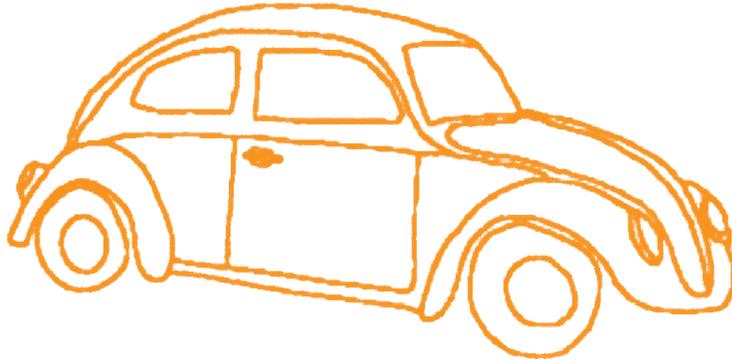


## START THE CONVERSATION:

- 1) Talk about what the child is doing or what the child is interested in.
- 2) Ask questions that relate to the child's experiences or interests.
- 3) Add to what the child says and model new language.
- 4) Give the child enough time to respond.



## FOLLOW THE CAR:



## FOLLOW THE CHILD'S LEAD AND THEN:

- **Comment and wait.**
- **Ask a question and wait.**
- **Respond by adding a little more and wait.**

Adapted with permission.

*StoryQUEST: Celebrating beginning language and literacy, first year annual report.* (April, 2004). Unpublished report, California Institute on Human Services, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, CA.

Cole, K., Maddox, M., Notari-Syverson, A., & Lim, Y.S. (2006). *Language is the key: Video programs for building language and literacy in early childhood.* Seattle, WA: Washington Learning Systems.