

Powerful Interactions in Early Childhood Programs

How Teachers Connect with Children to Extend Their Learning



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~ Welcome ~

- ◆ I'm Judy Jablon

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- ◆ Thanks for coming!



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To my co-authors, Amy Dombro, Shaun Johnsen, & Charlotte Stetson.
And to my colleagues at Early Childhood Investigations: Fran Simon and Andrea Miles.

POLL



Who has joined us today?

- a. Teacher/Provider/Caregiver/Assistant Teacher
- b. Home Visitor/Family Outreach
- c. Coach/Specialist/Mentor
- d. Consultant/Higher Ed Faculty
- e. Director/Supervisor/Manager/Owner

Today's Big Ideas

- ◆ **You** make a difference!
- ◆ **Interactions** foster relationships and learning.
- ◆ **Three steps** can turn everyday interactions into Powerful Interactions.
- ◆ **Powerful Interactions** create ripples of positive change.

POLL



What do you already know about
Powerful Interactions?

- A. Just getting started
- B. Somewhat familiar
- C. Very familiar

Relationships



... matter more than anything else. Human beings need to be nurtured. Teachers must nurture in ways that tap into the genius in each child.

Asa Hilliard

Research says:

- ◆ Relationships affect virtually all aspects of children's development.
- ◆ The quality of teacher-child relationships influences children's achievement in school.



Relationships with
some children are easy...

Others?
Not so much!



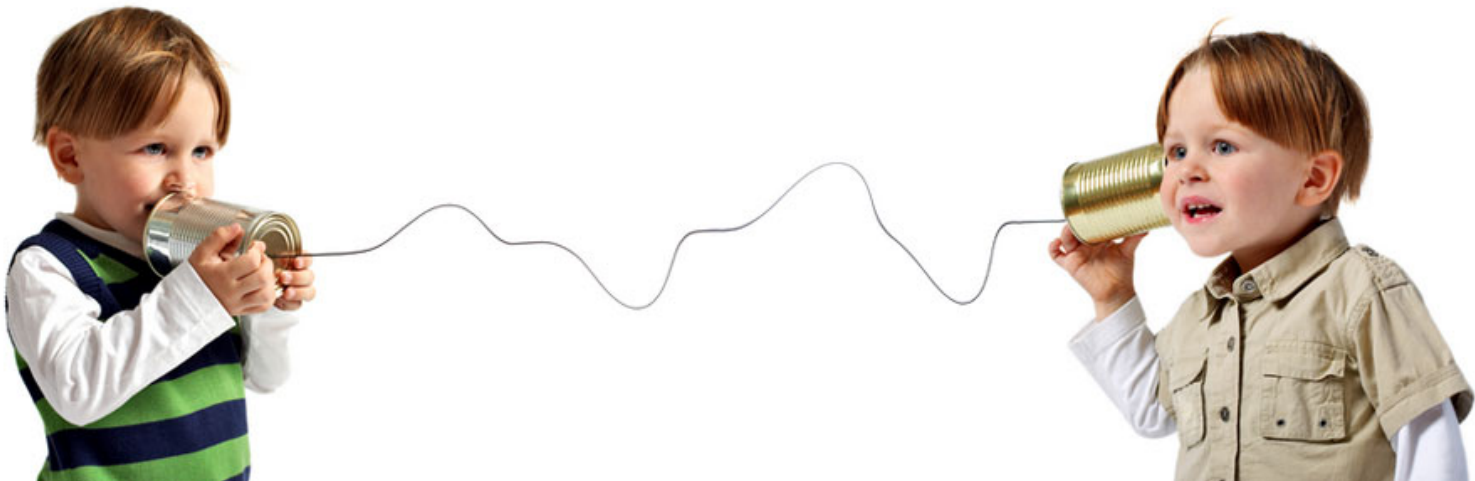
YOU Make a Difference



Intentionality

Interactions

... the daily exchanges in words and gestures that we have with others.



Interactions are like weaving





Everyday Interactions



Intentional Interactions

Research finds that interactions in which teachers intentionally promote learning are few and far between.

Early et al. 2005; Pianta 2010



Powerful Interactions

In a Powerful Interaction, you intentionally connect with a child in order to extend that child's learning.



3 Powerful Interactions Steps

Extend
Learning

Connect

Be
Present



Step 1 Be Present

- ◆ Pause and prepare.
- ◆ Observe and think.
- ◆ Give yourself permission to be intentional.



What gets in the way Being Present?

◆Static:

- Mental noise that interferes with focusing on what is truly important right now.
- Prevents connection.
- Impedes good decision-making.



Find the “Just Right Fit”

- ◆ Observe with an open mind.
- ◆ Decide how to individualize.
 - Temperament
 - Preferences and interests
 - Culture and language



Step 2 Connect



- ◆ Make a personal connection.
- ◆ Let the child know that you see her, are interested in what she's doing, and that you want to spend some time with her.

Listen to Learn



Can I quiet my mind
and my voice long
enough to really listen
to someone else?

To listen well...



- ◆ Think about how you look when listening.
- ◆ Keep an open mind.
- ◆ Convey the message, “I hear you.”
- ◆ Be open to ways that culture may affect listening.
- ◆ Allow pauses for thinking.
- ◆ Quiet your own agenda.

Step 3 Extend Learning

- ◆ Stay present.
- ◆ Maintain the connection.
- ◆ Stretch learning just a little bit.
- ◆ Powerful does not mean perfect!



The greatest opportunity for learning lies in moments of teacher-child interaction, when the teacher crafts learning experiences that stretch children just beyond their current skill level.

(Munro 2008)



Use Mirror Talk

- ◆ Pause to be present and observe.
- ◆ Quiet the urge to quiz or praise.
- ◆ Say: “I see that you...”
- ◆ Pause
- ◆ Decide what’s next.



Powerful Interactions & Assessment... go hand in hand!

Darius 10/2

Playdough & tools

D: hey look. I squished it.

T: D - I see you made the playdough flat.

D: Yea. It's flat. Like pizza.

T: it is flat and round like pizza too. I wonder if you can expand it - make it bigger.

D: Should I try?



- ◆ Step 1, observe.
- ◆ Step 2, personalize.
- ◆ Step 3, use Mirror Talk to focus and individualize.

Powerful Interactions and Dual Language Learners

- ◆ Learn a few key words in each child's language.
- ◆ Build your non-verbal communication skills (gestures, facial expressions, silly voices, pictures, props).
- ◆ Fine tune your observing skills to pick up on the non-verbal signals coming from the child.
- ◆ Reduce your static – listen to yourself and check if you are talking too much.

Make Powerful Interactions Work for You

- ◆ A few a day
- ◆ Work as a team.
- ◆ Write it down!

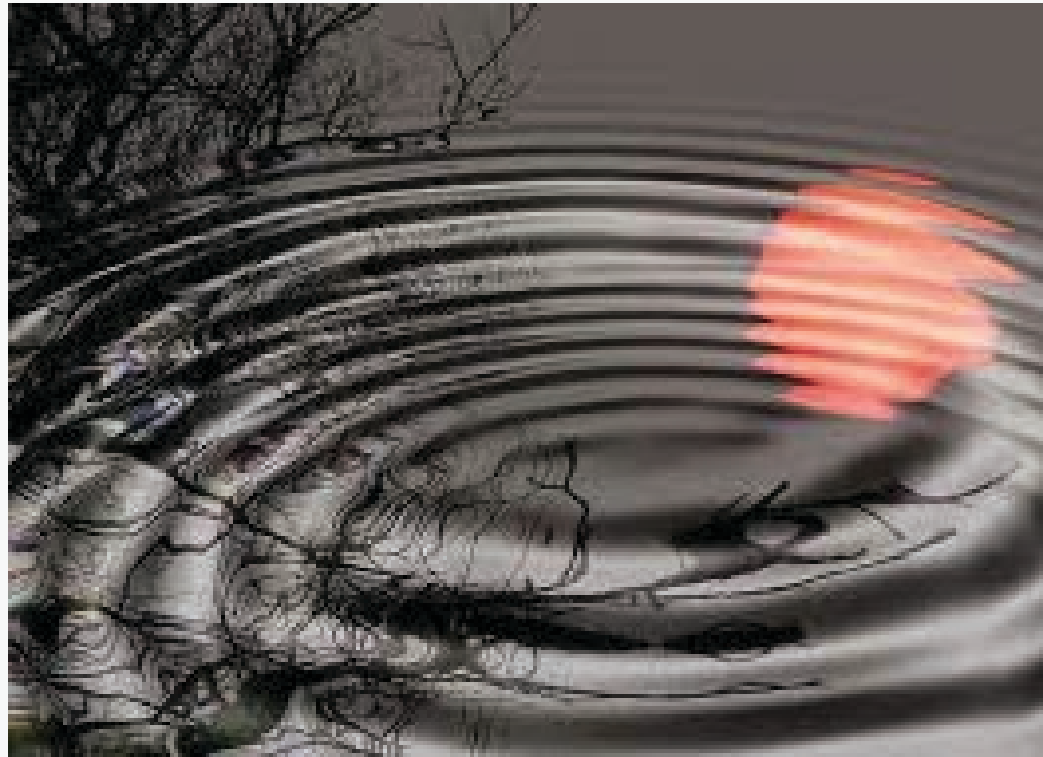


Powerful Interactions and Families

- ◆ When families recognize that you see and appreciate their child, they appreciate you!
- ◆ Staying open-minded and thoughtful helps you better understand families and help you build more useful and productive relationships.
- ◆ Powerful Interactions can make children and families feel heard, appreciated and understood.

A Powerful Interactions Stance

Begins with you...





5 Tips

1. Remind yourself that you make a difference!
2. Quiet the static and find the just right fit.
3. Pay attention to how you listen.
4. Use “mirror talk” rather than praise.
5. Strive for a few Powerful Interactions (not perfect) each day.

Taking Action

POLL



What's a 1st step you're willing to try to transform some everyday interactions into Powerful Interactions?

- A. Pause to prepare so you can quiet the static
- B. Practice listening to learn
- C. Use mirror talk to help you pause, observe and use language with children

Thank you Stay in touch~

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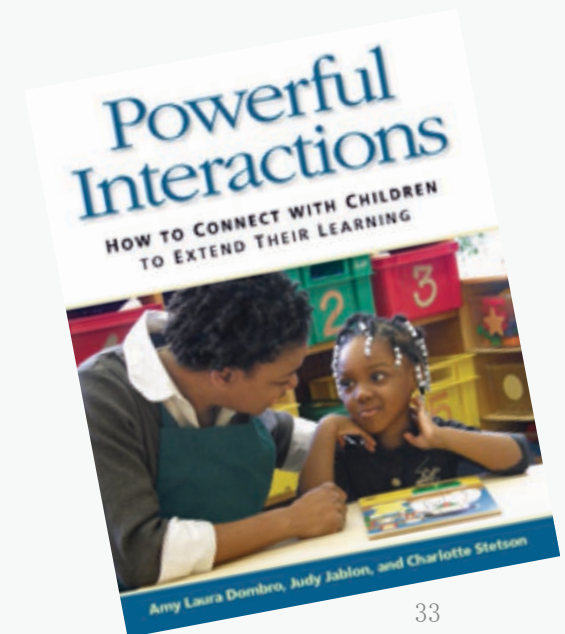
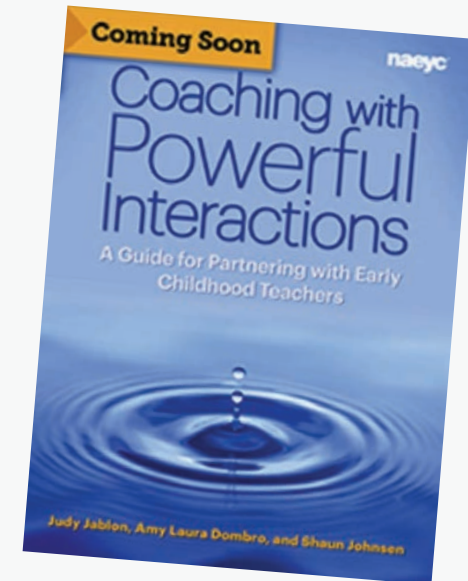
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