



Center for Early Literacy Learning

For **CLASSROOM-BASED** early childhood educators

Additional skill-building exercises to help teachers practice **RESPONSIVE TEACHING**

There is much to be said for the old adage: *Practice makes perfect*. The following exercises are designed to give teachers and other early childhood professionals extra practice in following the Center for Early Literacy Learning (CELL) learning model with the young children in their classrooms. This set of exercises focuses on helping classroom teachers/practitioners pay attention and respond to young children in ways that provide everyday literacy learning opportunities.

In these activities, teachers practice, evaluate, and reflect about Responsive Teaching. The intent is to take these practices into the classroom to provide the teacher with an authentic, hands-on experience utilizing the CELL model components.

Exercise 1

Activity:

Over the course of a week, focus on one aspect of Responsive Teaching per day. Identify one child for your focus.

Day 1: **NOTICE/PAY ATTENTION**

Take a closer look at the child and notice specific cues and signals. For example, what behaviors does this child exhibit when he/she is bored, excited, and/or sad? What are this child's interests? What are some of the materials, activities, and people that are favorites for this child?

Halfway through the day or at the end of the day, write down the child's cues and signals that you noticed.

Evaluate:

- What things did you notice about this child? How did you know the child was happy, sad, or angry?
- What were some of the cues and signals that you had not noticed before today?

Exercise 2

Activity:

Day 2: **RESPOND PROMPTLY AND APPROPRIATELY**

Respond promptly and appropriately to the child's behaviors when noticing a particular interest or moment of frustration. Afterwards, write down what the child's behaviors were and how you responded.

Evaluate:

- How did you respond appropriately?
- What did you notice when you were able to respond promptly?
- How did the child react when you responded promptly and appropriately?

Exercise 3

Activity:

Day 3: **INTRODUCE NEW INFORMATION**

Provide a literacy activity based on the child's interests. Interact with the child by introducing new information related to the child's interests. Expand on the child's contributions or challenge and encourage the child to do something different as a part of the literacy activity.

Evaluate:

- What behaviors occurred during your interaction with the child? What new information or challenges did you introduce to the child?
- How did the child respond to new information or new challenges?

Exercise 4

Activity:

Day 4: **SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE**

As the child engages in his/her favorite activities, take opportunities to *ask the child questions. Comment on behaviors and accomplishments.* Note any new skills developed and *provide opportunities* for their use.

Evaluate:

- When you provided literacy opportunities based on the child's interests, did you observe the child using any new literacy skills? If yes, what were the skills?
- How did the child respond when you commented on his/her accomplishments?

Exercise 5

Activity:

Day 5: Reflect on all of the FIVE Responsive Teaching techniques.

Responsive Teaching:

- **Notice** children's interests and participation in everyday literacy activities
- **Pay attention** to children's attempts to interact with others or with literacy materials
- **Respond promptly** when children want to interact with you or use literacy materials
- **Introduce new information** to expand language and literacy learning
- **Support and encourage** children to try new skills and behaviors

Reflect:

- Do you excel at one of the aspects of Responsive Teaching? Which one?
- What aspects of Responsive Teaching are challenging for you?
- How can you continue to work on the aspects that you find challenging?
- What kind of support do you need?