

# **Program One: Strengthening Children's Language, School Readiness, Emotion and Social Skills and Positive Relationships**



## **Part 2: Promoting Language Learning and Conversations**

### **Refrigerator Notes and Handouts**



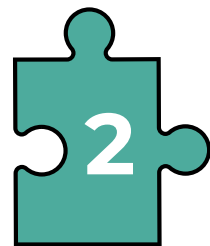
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### HOME ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK (1)



#### To Do:

**PLAY** daily using child-directed play and intentional descriptive commenting. Comment on your child's actions, describe their positions (on, under, in) as well as names of objects your child is playing with. Avoid closed-ended questions.

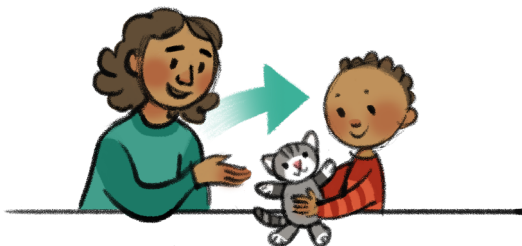
**USE** nonverbal language, visual and “serve and return” methods to expand conversations. Look for opportunities to discuss your child's school experiences, to use bilingual language & share family stories.

**KEEP TRACK** of your language and conversations on your record sheet. Bring to next session.



#### To Read:

Handouts, complete Reading Chapter One and Start Chapter Two, *Academic and Persistence Coaching Promotes Children's School Success*, in **The Incredible Years** parent book or audiobook.



## Part 2: Promoting Language Learning and Conversations

### HOME ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK (2)



#### To Do:

**PLAY** daily using child-directed play and intentional descriptive commenting and add a few open-ended questions. Respond to your child's communication with imitation, reflective commenting, enthusiasm and authenticity. Continue to use nonverbal language, visual and "serve and return" language learning methods to expand conversations.

**USE** puppets, games, songs, pretend play, interactive reading and bilingual language to enhance the richness of your child's language learning.

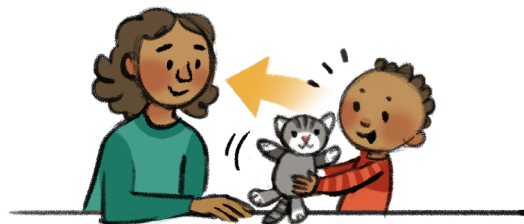
**KEEP TRACK** of your language and conversations on your record sheet.

**CONNECT WITH YOUR BUDDY** from the group to share your conversation experiences with your child.



#### To Read:

Complete Reading Handouts and Chapter One & Two in **The Incredible Years** parent book or audiobook.





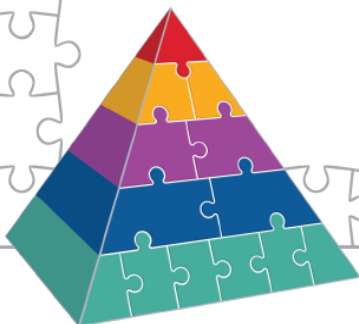
## Connecting with Your Buddy



From now until the final week of the Parenting Course you will be asked to check in via text, email, Zoom or phone with a parent from your group. You will have the same “buddy” for several weeks. The purpose of these checkin calls is to share ideas and “hot tips” about the home activities, such as how one of your play times went, or how you used the coaching approaches, or one of the ideas or principles you learned in the parent group.

These calls or buddy check-ins need last no more than 5 minutes and can be scheduled at your own and your buddy’s convenience.

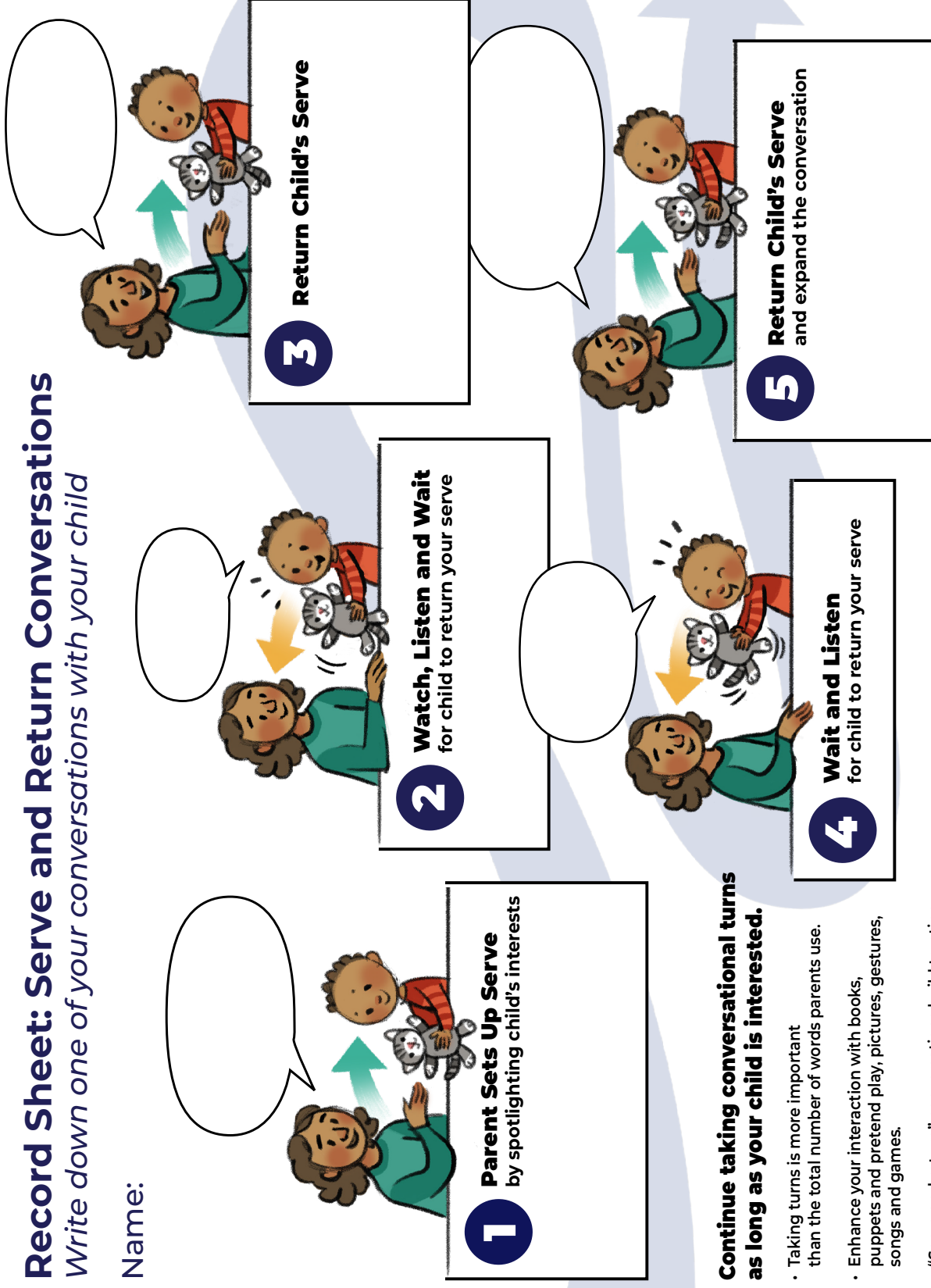
Parents sharing with each other can not only provide a rich bank of creative solutions but also be supportive of one another!



# Record Sheet: Serve and Return Conversations

Write down one of your conversations with your child

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

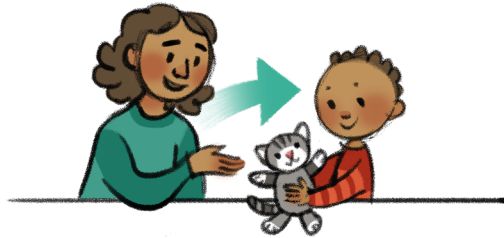


## Continue taking conversational turns as long as your child is interested.

- Taking turns is more important than the total number of words parents use.
- Enhance your interaction with books, puppets and pretend play, pictures, gestures, songs and games.
- "Serve and return" conversations build trusting relationships, and create feelings of safety and joy.

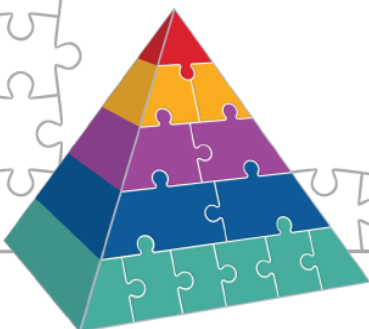
## REFRIGERATOR NOTES

### PROMOTING YOUR CHILD'S LANGUAGE LEARNING & CONVERSATIONS



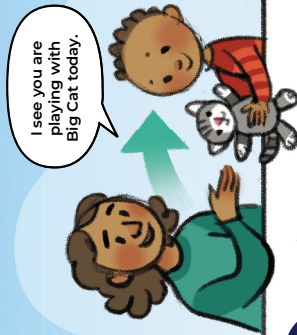
- Continue to be child-directed and follow your child's interests.
- Use intentional descriptive commenting tailored to your child's language level and special interests.
- Try using a few open-ended questions but avoid closed-ended test questions.
- Watch, wait and listen to your child's verbal & nonverbal responses.
- Respond to your child's verbal and nonverbal communication with imitation, reflective commenting, enthusiasm & authenticity.
- Engage in interactive reading approaches.
- Encourage the use of the home culture language and bilingual language learning.
- Share personal stories to enhance your child's language engagement.
- Combine verbal language with pictures, nonverbal gestures, puppets, pretend play, songs and games to enhance the richness of your child's language learning.

**The goal is for all children to become increasingly confident and secure communicators.**



# Serve and Return Conversations

## Building Responsive Language



### 1 Parent Sets Up Serve by spotlighting child's interests

- Get at eye-level and face to face
- Use intentional, descriptive commenting
- Follow your child's lead

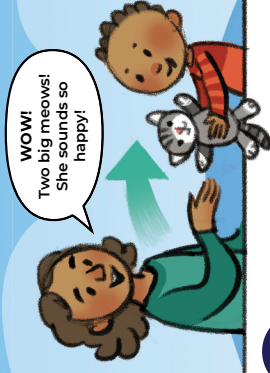


### 2 Watch, Listen and Wait for child to return your serve

- Child points, comments, or shows you something (verbally or nonverbally)

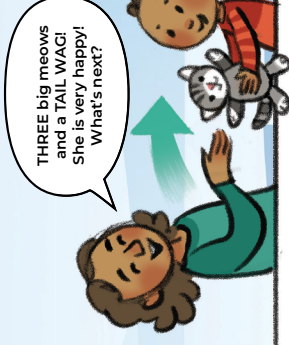


### 4 Wait and Listen for child to return your serve



### 3 Return Child's Serve

- Respond with imitation, reflective commenting, and enthusiastic gestures
- Focus on your child's interests
- Use language most comfortable to you



### 5 Return Child's Serve and expand the conversation

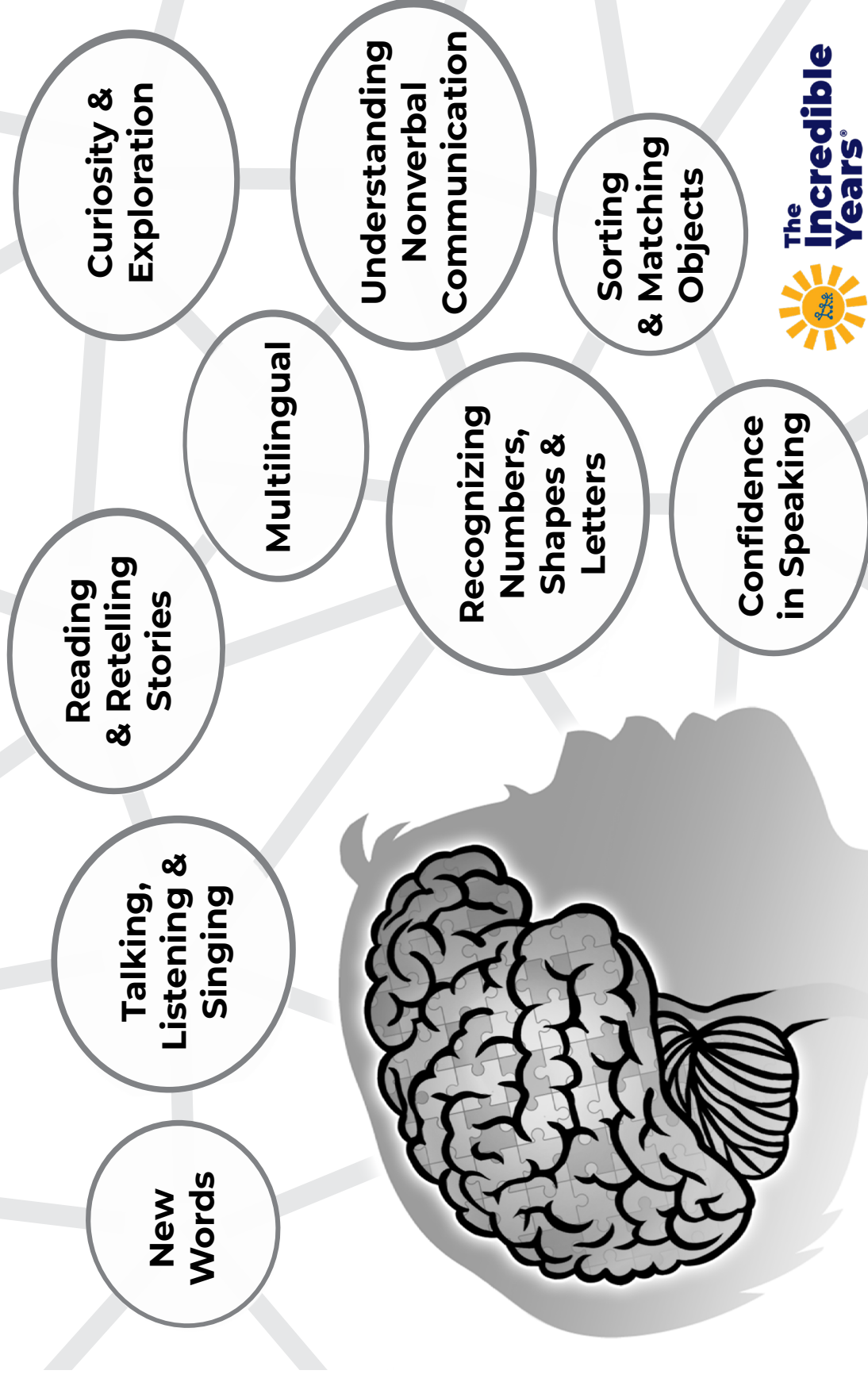
- Add new words intentionally
- Ask a few open-ended questions
- Share personal stories

### Continue taking conversational turns as long as your child is interested.

- Taking turns is more important than the total number of words parents use.
- Enhance your interaction with books, puppets and pretend play, pictures, gestures, songs and games.
- "Serve and return" conversations build trusting relationships, and create feelings of safety and joy.

Serve and Return is a phrase popularized by Harvard Researchers (Center on Developing Child).

## Building Children's Language and Cognitive Brain Connections







## 12 Key Steps to Support Your Child's Learning Through Child-Directed Narrated Play

1. **Follow Your Child's Lead:** Build on their interests and let them take the lead in play activities.
2. **Provide Unstructured Play Time:** Offer toys and materials that foster creativity, such as blocks, play dough, paints, and natural resources.
3. **Use Descriptive Commentary:** Enthusiastically describe what your child is doing in play. Avoid asking too many questions, and encourage their efforts with positive feedback.
4. **Imitate Your Child:** Mimic your child's actions and follow their lead as long as the behavior is appropriate. Let them be in charge of the play.
5. **Promote Conversations with "Serve and Return" Communication:** Engage in back-and-forth exchanges to encourage conversation and strengthen their language skills.
6. **Provide Assistance When Needed:** If your child encounters a problem, offer help after giving them time to try solving it independently. Wait for their confirmation that assistance is welcome.
7. **Impose Limits Gently:** If necessary, set clear and pleasant boundaries (e.g., "You may not color on the table, but here's some paper you can use instead").
8. **Ignore Problem Behaviors:** Avoid reinforcing negative behaviors like whining, crying, or tantrums. Redirect attention to positive actions.
9. **Support Transitions:** Help your child smoothly move from one type of play to another, whether from quiet activities to active ones, or vice versa.
10. **Engage in Pretend Play:** Participate in imaginative, make-believe play with puppets, toys, or role-playing to enhance creativity and empathy.
11. **Praise Efforts and Creativity:** Offer plenty of praise for your child's curiosity, creativity, imagination, and self-discovery during play.
12. **Give a Transition Warning:** Let your child know when playtime will end, and reassure them that you'll engage in it again soon.


Remember, play provides a unique opportunity for children to experiment, learn, and develop in a stress-free, imaginative environment.



## Brainstorm/Buzz: Barriers to Child-directed Play

Write down the benefits of child-directed play using descriptive commenting & “serve and return” conversations with your child. Record any difficulties or barriers you encountered to doing this. See if you can find any solutions to your barriers to communicating in this way.

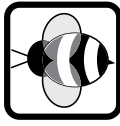


Benefits of Descriptive Commenting & “Serve and Return” Conversations	Barriers or Difficulties with Using Language in this way
	
<p><b>Goal:</b></p> <p>I will commit to playing with my child _____ times this week for _____ minutes.</p>	



## Brainstorm/Buzz: Building Children's Language and Cognitive Brain Connections

Write in ways you will focus on promoting and strengthening your child's language and conversation skills.



### Building Children's Language and Cognitive Brain Connections

