

FOUR STEPS for the Successful Conversation Coach

*There are FOUR STEPS we might consider as we embark on a journey
Through the world of conversations...*

STEP ONE: KNOW YOURSELF

In essence, we are the leaders in this journey and the children are following us. So ... knowing how we function as conversationalists is a good place to start.

Here are some questions that we might contemplate:

1. Am I a confident conversationalist or do I struggle in social settings?
2. What are some of the hurdles I need to scale in my own life to be the very best conversationalist that I can be?
3. What are some of the strengths that I have as a conversationalist that will help me in my role as a Conversation Coach?

STEP TWO: KNOW YOUR TOOLS

When we have a variety of tools that we know well, we can then use what is needed to meet the individual needs of the children with whom we are serving.

If choosing to use the Color My Conversation technique, it is highly recommended that the Conversation Coach read through the whole manual before initiating the lessons. Though the lessons have been laid out chronologically, there are teaching concepts that one might choose to pull from later lessons into earlier lessons in order to take advantage of the teachable moments.

STEP THREE: KNOW YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

It is valuable to take the time to gain background information about all of the children in the group.

Here are some questions that we might contemplate:

1. Who are the children with stronger conversational abilities in the group?
2. What types of personalities do the children have?
3. How do the children interact with each other?
4. Do the children have other issues (i.e. sensory, cognitive, emotional, speech-language, family related concerns, etc.) that need to be taken into consideration?

STEP FOUR: KNOW YOUR ROLE

Here are five simple tips to make your lessons fun, engaging and effective!

1. BE INTENTIONAL – Read the needs as you observe and assess group dynamics.
2. BE A PERSON OF INTEREST – You want to be the most interesting attraction in the room.
3. BE A CURIOS LEARNER – Your curiosity will be contagious.
4. BE FLEXIBLE – EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED – Social language lessons, like the act of conversation, can be “predictably unpredictable”!
5. BE ALERT FOR TEACHABLE MOMENTS! – Teachable moments can pop out of nowhere. A skilled Conversation Coach will be able to capture them and make the most of them.

Delmonico, 2014