

A conversation with Ibrahim



Tamina Parvez is a Early Years Educator at Sheringham Nursery School and Children's Centre in Newham, London . She has been working at Sheringham for 8 years and is currently doing her teacher training.

Ibrahim is playing in the small world area with the animals and play foods. I join him, sitting on his level.

Ibrahim: "Animals."

Tamina: "I can see a giraffe" - Tamina points to a giraffe.

Ibrahim: "Gummy bear" - Ibrahim points to a bear.

Tamina: "The bear is standing."

Ibrahim bounces the tiger.

Tamina: "The tiger is jumping".

Ibrahim: "Tiger ... see". Ibrahim puts the tiger on the lion's back.

Tamina: "The tiger is on the lion's back". Ibrahim picks up a banana.

Ibrahim: "Banana".

Tamina: "Yes, there are 2 bananas."

Ibrahim: "2 bananas"

Ibrahim starts to laugh, Tamina joins in.

Tamina: "The Tiger is eating a banana."

Ibrahim: "Yeah... eating banana..."

Tamina: "The tiger is eating a banana, he's hungry"

The aim of my conversation with Ibrahim is to support his communication and language development.

As with all my colleagues at Sheringham, I am guided by the 4 strategies of the ShREC approach.

- I engage with Ibrahim in his play (**Sh** for sharing attention). Throughout, I sit at his level and follow his lead, showing that I value what he is doing and want to engage with it.
- I respond with interest to his words and play (**r** for respond) with short comments.
- I repeat Ibrahim's words, narrate some of his play and add to his speech using an extra word or phrase (**e** for expand). I aim to pitch my expansions just above Ibrahim's.
- We have a back-and-forth conversation (**c** for conversation). I take his lead and leave plenty of time (around 10 seconds) for him to respond.

Throughout my participation in Ibrahim's play, I am mindful of not saying too much. I don't want to overload him as this won't be effective in supporting his language development.

Also, I am careful not to ask questions. Ibrahim is not ready for this yet and, in any case, too many questions can make children feel under pressure or 'put on the spot'. So, I comment rather than question.

I find ShREC an accessible and useful guide to how I approach interacting with the children - the quality of our conversations has improved so much already. And I think they'll only get better.

Further Reading:

The ShREC approach: 4 evidence-informed strategies to promote high quality interactions with young children

PACEY guest webinar: [PACEY Live webinar: High quality interactions in the early years. The ShREC approach explained | PACEY](#)