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THE  
TEACHING  
YOUNG CHILDREN  
STAFF DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

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NAEYC's magazine *Teaching Young Children* (TYC) is designed especially for preschool educators. Articles in *Teaching Young Children* reinforce the accreditation criteria for NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards. (Go to [www.naeyc.org/academy](http://www.naeyc.org/academy) for more information on accreditation standards.)

### Using this guide

*NEXT: The Teaching Young Children Staff Development Guide* suggests ways to build on the content of selected TYC articles. For these articles you will find

- a brief summary of the main ideas;
- an indication of which NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards are most closely related to the content (check the tab at the top of each page);
- key points to reinforce;
- discussion prompts in Let's Talk;
- workshop activities in For Further Thinking; and
- ways to apply content in In the Classroom.

Center directors can use *NEXT* to plan staff meetings or training sessions, staff development specialists can use it to design workshops, and teacher educators might incorporate some of the ideas in their classes.

### A few notes

- Handouts for the activities in *NEXT* appear at [www.naeyc.org/tyc/NEXT](http://www.naeyc.org/tyc/NEXT).
- All page numbers refer to *Teaching Young Children*, Volume 2, Number 5, unless otherwise noted.
- No permission is needed to make copies of NAEYC-copyrighted articles in *Teaching Young Children* as long as they bear a credit line and are distributed at no cost.
- Depending on the setting in which you meet, you can ask participants to do activities in pairs or small groups or as classroom teams.
- Ask volunteers to type and disseminate the ideas generated in the sessions.
- Teachers and *NEXT* users can share their ideas, read articles, and find other useful resources at [www.naeyc.org/tyc](http://www.naeyc.org/tyc).

### **NEXT contributors**

2 Good Guidance. Using Words Wisely: Spreading Positive Messages Instead of Gossip

—Holly Elissa Bruno

3 The Power of Documentation in the Early Childhood Classroom—Hilary Seitz

4 Real-Life Reasons to Write—Louis Mark Romei

6 Sharing Time: So Much More than Show-and-Tell—Marie Sloane

7 News from the Field. How Should Teachers Respond to Children's Private Speech?

—Laura J. Colker

**This article explains how gossip harms** children, teachers, and families. It offers practical strategies on how to bring adult gossip and whining to a halt, along with tips on appropriate ways to vent frustrations.

**Key points** to reinforce during staff development sessions:

- ➔ NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct (P-3A.2) requires teachers to respectfully and directly address conflicts with peers to resolve the issues.
- ➔ Gossip is defined as talking about another person who is not present with the intention to harm that person's reputation; listening to gossip is gossiping.
- ➔ Gossip stoppers such as "I need to focus on the children now" or "I am not comfortable talking about someone who is not present" model appropriate behavior for children.
- ➔ Venting frustrations can be constructive if limited to less than 5 minutes, addressed to an appropriate person (supervisor), and followed by taking action to solve the underlying problem.

### Let's Talk

1. Can you recall a time when you intervened in a conflict among children? What caused the conflict? What intervention did you make? How did the children respond? What behavior did you hope to reinforce?
2. Can you recall a time you experienced or witnessed a conflict between adults? How might the same principles you used to help children resolve and learn from conflicts apply to intervening with adults?

### For Further Thinking

1. **Focus on strengths and challenges of working with others.** Give each participant a slip of paper with these words at the top: "I am grateful/frustrated (circle one) when a co-worker \_\_\_\_\_." Have everyone complete at least one slip of paper based on their workplace experiences. To ensure anonymity, have participants tightly fold the slips of paper, place them in a box, then shake the box. On a piece of chart paper, label two columns "Helpful dynamics" and "Hurtful dynamics." As participants take turns pulling slips from the box and reading them aloud to the group, record the comments in the appropriate column. Discuss, "Are there particular strengths and challenges of working in predominantly female organizations?"
2. **Discuss case studies.** Distribute Handout 1: Case Studies. Refer participants to "Gossip Stoppers for Teachers" on page 11. Have participants form small groups to read and discuss the case studies.
3. **Distribute Handout 2: Agreement to Resolve Problems and Excerpt from the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.** Ask participants to work with a partner to discuss and identify how the written agreement could make a difference in their work setting. What challenges might arise in implementing the terms of the agreement? What changes, if any, would you have to make? Ask the pairs to also read and discuss the excerpt from the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and how it relates to their experiences.

### In the Classroom or Teachers' Lounge

1. **Implement and document.** Invite participants to journal about their experiences resolving conflicts among children (child to child) and peers (adult to adult). Ask them to answer questions such as these in their journal entries:
  - What caused the conflict?
  - What intervention did you choose to make?
  - How did the children/peers respond?
  - What behavior did you hope to reinforce?
  - Which of the suggestions in this article were most useful?
2. **Follow up.** At the next session, ask participants to share their experiences resolving conflicts, helping children change their behaviors, and changing their own behavior. What did they find challenging? In what situations did they meet strong resistance? What did they do that resulted in success? Explain that creating a gossip-free work environment can take a long time.

**This article defines and explains the purpose and value of documentation.** It describes effective formats, discusses different audiences and purposes, and helps teachers choose a focus for documentation.

**Note:** Prior to the session,

1. Gather poster board, construction paper, markers, glue, tape, and other items participants can use to create documentation pieces during For Further Thinking, 1. Practice documenting.
2. Make copies of applicable state and local early learning standards.
3. Read the full *Young Children* (March 2008) article “The Power of Documentation in the Early Childhood Classroom,” by Hilary Seitz, at [www.naeyc.org/tyc](http://www.naeyc.org/tyc).

**Key points** to reinforce during staff development sessions:

- ➔ Documentation tells the story and purpose of an event, experience, or long-term study.
- ➔ Documentation helps to extend children’s learning.
- ➔ Documentation is a collaborative process that engages teachers, families, and children in thinking about learning.

## Let’s Talk

1. Are there photos from your childhood that help you remember a certain accomplishment or event? How do you feel when you see these photos? How do you keep track of your own special events and experiences as an adult?
2. How do you record and display learning in your classroom? What topic interests or intrigues the children in your program right now? How do you record or show this interest and the children’s exploration of it (photographs, video, anecdotal records)? How would a classroom visitor know what the children have been exploring recently?

## For Further Thinking

1. **Practice documenting.** Ask participants to form small groups. Distribute Handout 1: Practicing Documentation and review the directions. Have each group complete the activity and prepare to share their documentation piece with the full group.
2. **Extend children’s learning with documentation.** Have participants continue working in the same small groups. Distribute Handout 2: Extending Documentation and review the directions. Have each group complete the activity and prepare to share their lesson plan with the full group.
3. **Use documentation to show what children have learned.** Have the small groups review the early learning standards, curriculum goals, and developmental domains that are addressed in the documentation they created. Ask them to identify additional materials or experiences to enhance learning. How might they support children who need additional support? How can families be involved in the process?

## In the Classroom

1. **Implement and document.** Distribute Handout 3: Photography Hints and Handout 4: Documentation Hints. Review the following instructions. Ask participants to focus on a small group of children over a one-day period. They should take photographs and write anecdotal records to document what materials the children use (to extend future learning experiences); how they use the materials (cognitive, motor, language development); and their interactions with peers and adults (social development). Ask participants to print the photographs and review them with the children. They should write down children’s comments about the experiences and add the children’s “voices” to their anecdotal records. In a meeting with their teaching team (colleagues, families, and others), participants can discuss what the children in the photographs are doing and noticing, what they are learning, and what teachers might do to extend the children’s learning.
2. **Create a documentation panel.** Highlight the children’s actions and experiences through simple displays using the photographs and anecdotal records. Include information about which early learning standards, curriculum goals, and developmental areas are being addressed. For an example, see the photo on pages 12–13. Have fun!
3. **Follow up.** At the next staff development session, have participants report back on their documentation experiences and share their documentation displays.

**This article suggests ways to encourage children to write** as a natural part of their daily routines and activities. Readers are encouraged to provide children with a variety of writing opportunities to support a range of skill levels.

**Note:** Prior to the session, obtain a children’s book—one from the following list or one of your choosing—in which writing is a part of the story. During For Further Thinking 1. Read about writing, the book will be the prompt for a discussion about the magic of writing.

*Bunny Cakes*, by Rosemary Wells. Ruby sends Max to the store with a list of ingredients for the cake she is baking for their grandmother. Max adds to the list the red-hot marshmallow squirters he needs for his own earthworm cake.

*Click, Clack, Moo: Cows that Type* or *Giggle, Giggle, Quack*, by Doreen Cronin. Barnyard characters use the written word to express their demands and to get what they want and need. They demonstrate the purpose and power of writing in everyday life.

*Dear Juno*, by Soyung Pak. A Korean-American boy and his grandmother in Korea carry on a meaningful correspondence, although they do not share a common language. They each use pictures to tell the other what is going on in their lives.

**Key points** to reinforce during staff development sessions:

- ➔ Preschool children can learn about the purposes of writing through daily routines such as signing the attendance sheet or a list for a turn in a center.
- ➔ Teachers can model and engage children in making lists, writing notes home to families, and creating a class newsletter.
- ➔ Families can support children’s writing at home as a natural part of daily activities (for example, adding items to the grocery list).

### Let’s Talk

1. Do you write often? What kinds of things do you write about? When and where do you write and for what reasons? For example, do you keep a journal, write down favorite quotes and sayings, or write text messages, e-mails, tweets, or Facebook updates?
2. What do you remember about writing as a child? What kinds of writing did you do in school and at home? What were the purposes for your writing? What kinds of writing did you enjoy?
3. When, where, and for what reasons do the children in your classroom write? How do you provide numerous opportunities for children to write? What do you do to support children’s varied writing skills?

### For Further Thinking

1. **Read about writing.** Ask for a volunteer to read aloud the children’s book you brought to the session. Use the book as a discussion starter. How do the characters (Max, Juno, or the barnyard animals) use writing for real-life reasons? What do they know about writing? What do they still need to learn about writing? What do the characters have in common with the young writers in your classroom?
2. **Write in every interest area—and outdoors.** Have participants divide up to focus on daily routines, an indoor or outdoor area of particular interest, or a topic for a study or project that a class is or could be engaged in. Each group will brainstorm writing materials and activities to offer children, list their ideas on chart paper, and post the chart paper on the wall. Participants can then move around the room reviewing the lists and adding their own suggestions. Lead a full-group summary discussion before moving on.
3. **Plan to expand classroom writing opportunities.** Ask participants to work with a partner to develop a plan for increasing children’s opportunities to write for real-life reasons. Plans should include the writing materials needed, and describe how to introduce the writing opportunities, accommodate a range of skill levels, support dual language learners (if appropriate), communicate with families, and document what children do, say, write, and learn.

- 4. Involve families.** Discuss the numerous ways families can support children’s writing at home. Many of the ideas in the article can be adapted for home settings. For example, just as children can help their teacher write notes home to families, children can help parents write a note back to the teacher. Ask participants to work in pairs to review the real-life opportunities on pages 21–23 and discuss how to encourage families to support children’s writing at home.

What writing materials might children and families need? How can families and teachers keep one another up-to-date about children’s writing opportunities and writing samples? How can busy families incorporate writing time as a natural part of their day? Remind participants to focus on activities that use materials most families have at home and to think of ways to provide a “starter kit” of paper and writing tools that children can use at home. Invite the pairs to share their ideas with the full group.

### In the Classroom

- 1. Implement and document.** Urge participants to implement their plans for expanding classroom and home writing opportunities. They can document what happens and what children learn as the new writing opportunities are made available. Suggest that they observe and focus on two children who have different interests and skills. Documentation can include writing samples, information shared by families, photographs, and anecdotal records.
- 2. Follow up.** At the next session, ask participants to describe the changes they made in their classrooms, how children responded, the reactions from families, how they supported dual language learners, and so on. Participants can share their documentation items. After all participants have described what they did and how children responded, ask them to each write a note to one other participant in which they acknowledge the individual’s creative ideas for supporting young writers.

**This article describes a classroom routine that allows children to share their important work with each other.**

Replacing traditional show-and-tell, sharing time can provide similar benefits while focusing on children's learning and accomplishments.

**Notes:** Prior to the session

1. Gather some open-ended materials that participants can use to create something to share. Include recycled and reusable resources and a variety of art supplies (glue, paper, paint, markers, and so on) and tools (scissors, staplers, brushes, and so on). If you prefer, you can ask participants to each bring some materials to share with others in the session.
2. List the six Sharing Time Steps (page 26) on a piece of chart paper so you can refer to them during the session.

**Key points** to reinforce during staff development sessions:

- ➔ Sharing time involves no toys or things from home; it is an opportunity for children to share an example of their high-quality work.
- ➔ Teachers encourage children to further develop their ideas and expand their work; they help children prepare to explain the work to their classmates.
- ➔ Sharing time allows children to value their own accomplishments and those of others in the group.
- ➔ Like any classroom routine, sharing takes some practice to implement. Try it, evaluate how it went, and go from there.

### Let's Talk

1. How do you feel when you achieve a goal, create something special, or master a skill? How and with whom do you share your accomplishments? How do you feel when you show or tell someone else about your "cool ideas and discoveries?"
2. Do you remember show-and-tell from when you were a child? What did you like about it? What is show-and-tell or sharing like in your classroom? How does the current routine support children? What might you want to change?
3. What do the children in your care get excited about as they work and play? What do they build, paint, create, write, and so on that they might want to show to the rest of the class?

### For Further Thinking

1. **Create something to share (Sharing Time Step 1).** Place the materials and tools you collected on a table and invite half of the participants to choose items they will use to make a creation. Have this group work in pairs or triads to discuss and then create something to share. Allow enough time for participants to plan and then carry out their plans. Ask the other half of the participants to observe, ask questions, make comments, suggest materials, and otherwise support the creators (as would teachers).
2. **Demonstrate and experience sharing (Sharing Time Steps 2 and 3).** Ask for volunteers—one pair or triad to share their creation and one "teacher" to lead them through the sharing steps. Review the steps with the full group, then ask the volunteers to role play a "share." After the role play ask the volunteers to report on their reactions to the sharing experience. Lead a full group discussion about the share and answer questions.
3. **Plan to implement sharing time.** Ask participants to work with a partner to plan how they could implement sharing time in their classrooms. Explain that sharing will need some parameters. They can think through:
  - What will the standards be for something to get shared?
  - How many "shares" each day? How will I manage if there are more "shares" than we have time for?
  - Will some children want to share a lot more than others? Is that a problem? If so, how can I respond?
  - Do I need to adapt the Sharing Time steps shown?
  - How will I introduce the new routine to children and to families?Have each pair write a note to families describing their plans and the benefits of sharing time.

(continued on page 8)

**This article summarizes research** on young children's private speech and provides guidance to teachers on responding appropriately to children. Differences in the use of private speech by children with and without behavior challenges are covered.

**Key points** to reinforce during staff development sessions:

- ➔ Private speech is a natural part of children's development.
- ➔ Private speech helps many children perform better on cognitive tasks such as counting.
- ➔ Children who use private speech have a difficult time "turning it off" even when asked to do so.

### Let's Talk

1. Do you have any memories of yourself or your siblings using private speech as a child? What were the circumstances? How did adults react? Did it seem to be okay to use this type of speech?
2. Do you ever find yourself using private speech as an adult? Under what circumstances? Has anyone caught you doing this and made you feel embarrassed? Do you think that some children feel this way too? What can you do to make yourself feel comfortable about modeling the use of private speech for children?
3. Have you ever noticed a difference in the use of private speech by children with and without behavior problems? Based on the research reported in the article, what might you do to help children with behavior problems make use of private speech?

### For Further Thinking

1. **Imagine the monologues.** Ask participants to look at the photos in the article and imagine what the children might be uttering out loud as they work. The article begins with an example for the first photo: "Carlos says aloud to no one, 'I make it green.'" Challenge each participant to come up with three possible examples of private speech for each of the three photos. When everyone has finished, have the participants share their examples with the full group.
2. **Use children's own words to help them.** Have participants work with a partner to review the examples of private speech from the above activity. Each pair should develop a plan for supporting the development of each of the three children in the photos. They can use the examples developed by either partner or combine their examples. Have the pairs present their plans to the full group. How are the plans alike? How are they different?
3. **Plan a sharing session.** Lead a full group discussion about what information on children's private speech is important to share with families. Ask a volunteer to record the content points on chart paper. Next, have participants form small groups and ask each group to develop a plan for sharing this information with children's families. Participants might develop a plan for a workshop, a parent education meeting, a home visit, a handout, an e-mail message, or another form of communication. Next, groups can present their plans to the full group.


### In the Classroom

1. **Record children's private speech.** Have participants select a child in their class who uses private speech and "shadow" him or her for a day or two with tape recorder in hand. Participants should do their best to record the child's use of private speech and write a note about what the child was doing at the time of the recording. Next, participants can review the tape, reflect on the child's use of private speech, and plan ways to support the child's development, much as they did in For Further Thinking. Participants should implement their plans and take notes on what happens.
2. **Follow up.** At the next staff development session, have participants share the results of their taping experiences. How did they develop and implement a plan based on what they heard? How effective were their efforts? What changes did they see in the children's behavior as a result of their actions? How can they continue to support children's private speech in the future?

(continued from page 6)

### In the Classroom

- 1. Implement and document.** Ask participants to use their plans to implement sharing time in their classrooms. They can record what happens, children's reactions, family comments, children's dictations about their work, and so on along with photographs that show the children's work. Suggest keeping a journal about what worked well and what needs further refinement to make this approach to sharing work for the children in their classrooms.
- 2. Follow up.** At the next session, ask participants to share their documentation to tell the story of what happened when they implemented sharing time in their classroom. Ask,
  - How did the children respond?
  - How did families react?
  - How did the new routine benefit children?
  - Do you plan to continue this routine?
  - What other changes might you make?

Look for this icon  indicating that handouts are available online at [www.naeyc.org/tyc/NEXT](http://www.naeyc.org/tyc/NEXT).

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