Talking with Children

Early childhood teachers know that the quality of child–teacher interactions has an impact on children's social and educational outcomes. Talking with children is central to early learning, but the significant details of high-quality conversations in early childhood settings are not always obvious. This handbook brings together experts from across the globe to share evidence of teachers talking with children in early learning environments. It applies the methodology of conversation analysis to questions about early childhood education, and shows why this method of studying discourse can be a valuable resource for professional development in early childhood. Each chapter of this handbook includes an up-to-date literature review; shows how interactional pedagogy can be achieved in everyday interactions; and demonstrates how to apply this learning in practice. It offers unique insights into real-life early childhood education practices, based on robust research findings, and provides practical advice for teaching and talking with children.

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Talking with Children

A Handbook on Interaction in Early Childhood Education

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For all the early childhood educators.
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and Membership Categorization Analytic Approach’. Much of the analysis in
her Ph.D. project relied on detailed observation of participants’ non-verbal
behaviour, such as bodily posture, gaze direction, and hand movement. In
turn, it forced her to learn a new skill: making line drawings fit for multi-
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an interactional achievement not only defined by the management of two or more linguistic codes, but also by the coordination of sociocultural meaning within everyday routines. Her research also examines how parent–child interactions are shaped by the broader discourses, practices, and ideologies related to disability and race.
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Notes on Transcription Conventions

The transcription conventions used throughout this book were first published in Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974), and developed by Gail Jefferson (2004). There are theoretical, methodological, and practical concerns in how transcripts aim to capture spoken and embodied interaction (see Gardner, 2001; Hepburn and Bolden, 2012; Mondada, 2018; Ochs, 1979), but here we simply provide the conventions as a reference for the chapters that follow. In this Handbook, we have used the core conventions used in conversation analysis listed below; any additional conventions used by authors will be explained in their chapter.

These conventions were first developed when researchers used typewriters rather than computers, so were limited to the keys available. Symbols used do not mark punctuation, but instead are employed to capture some detail of how the talk is done.

. falling intonation
, slightly rising or continuing intonation
? rising intonation
¿ intonation that rises more than a comma but less than a question mark
:: lengthened syllable
↓ sharp fall in pitch
↑ sharp rise in pitch
[ ] overlapping talk
( ) unintelligible stretch
(0.5) length of silence in tenths of a second
> < increase in tempo, rushed stretch of talk
< > slower tempo
hh audible outbreath
.hh audible inbreath
° ° talk that is quieter than the surrounding talk
(( ))) description of accompanying behaviour
→ points to a phenomena of particular interest, to be discussed by the author
Notes on Transcription Conventions


