



Teachers who offer opportunities for children to express their ideas in the classroom increase children's motivation and desire to learn. Some ways teachers can follow children's lead include:

- Building on children's interests and incorporating their ideas into activities
- Providing children with choices
- Encouraging children to express their ideas

Below are some suggested strategies and examples of what this looks like in action. There are other ways to follow children's lead. Please note that in some cases, the "What it is not" may sometimes be appropriate according to the various needs of the classroom.

BUILD ON CHILDREN'S INTEREST:

What this looks like in action:	What it is not:
During afternoon dismissal, the teacher talks to a parent about a child's recent after-school interest. Teacher: Juan, your mom is telling me about how much you enjoy cooking with her every evening. Is this true? Juan: Yes, I love mixing and stirring! Teacher: That's wonderful. Would you like us to cook a few things at school? You could show our friends how you help at home. Juan: Can we make pancakes? Teacher: Sure, let's plan it out with our classmates tomorrow!	During afternoon dismissal, the teacher talks to a parent about a child's recent after-school interest. Teacher: Juan, your mom is telling me about how much you enjoy cooking with her every evening. Is this true? Juan: Yes, I love mixing and stirring! Teacher: That's wonderful! (<i>and does not pursue as a classroom activity</i>)

PROVIDE CHILDREN WITH CHOICES:

What this looks like in action:	What it is not:
While transitioning from a whole group book reading to snack time, the teacher lets the children pick how they would like to get to their tables. Teacher: Ok, friends we just read a book about a few of our favorite birds. When I call your name you can choose how you would like to go to snack. You can soar like an eagle, waddle like a penguin, or swim like a duck. If you think of other animals, that's ok too.	While transitioning from a whole group book reading to snack time, the teacher calls out children's names and they go to their tables.

ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO EXPRESS IDEAS:

What this looks like in action:	What it is not:
During outdoor play, the teacher approaches a child drawing with chalk on the pavement. Teacher: Annie, I see that you are enjoying drawing with that chalk. Can you tell me about your picture? Child: It's snowing! Teacher: Wow, I can see that! Why is the little girl inside the house? Child: It's too cold. Her mom says that she has to go inside. Teacher: How can she stay warm inside? Child: She can wear lots and lots of sweaters! Teacher: That's right! What other ideas do you have? Child: She can drink hot chocolate! <i>Exchanges continue...</i>	During outdoor play, the teacher approaches a child drawing with chalk on the pavement. Teacher: Annie, I see that you are enjoying drawing with that chalk. I like your pretty picture.