



Es and Ps with Falling Leaves: Tips to Strengthen Your Child’s Language and Thinking

Every conversation you have with your child gives her opportunities to build her language skills. If your child is preschool aged (3—5 years old), you can give her language learning an extra boost by adding the “E’s and Ps” to your everyday conversations.

What are the E’s and P’s?

The E’s and P’s are seven ways to expand your child’s thinking and use of language. They are: **E**xplaining, **E**xperiences, **E**motions, **E**valuating, **P**redicting, **P**retending/Imagining and **P**roblem-solving.

When you use the E’s and P’s, you encourage your child to use her knowledge and experience, as well as her problem-solving skills, to do things like:

- compare and contrast
- explain why things happen
- evaluate ideas and form opinions
- understand the perspectives of others
- predict what will happen in the future
- think of creative solutions

When you have conversations that support your child to think this way, you encourage her to use her language skills to talk about topics beyond what is happening in the moment. Conversations like this encourage your child to use more complex language with words like “because”, phrases with “if” and “then”, and different verb tenses. This is also the kind of language your child will be expected to use in school, so building this language now sets her on the path to academic success.

Using falling leaves to build the E's and P's

Whether your child likes jumping in giant piles of leaves, kicking through them with her boots, or collecting them in different colours, one thing is for sure – the fall season provides lots of opportunities for interesting and enjoyable conversations.

Here are some tips for how you can build the E's and P's while out on a walk among the autumn leaves:

Explain

It's important for your child to understand not only what is happening, but why something is happening. This builds her understanding of cause-and-effect and encourages her to come up with her own explanations for things.

What you could say:

“The reason the leaves are falling is because the trees go to sleep for the winter. They'll grow new leaves when it's warm and sunny again in the spring.”

Experiences

Relating what you see to something your child knows or has experienced helps her make connections between old and new learning.

What you could say:

“Wow, look at that big pile of leaves! It's just like the big pile we had in our backyard when we raked up all the leaves. Do you remember how you and your brother took turns jumping in it?”

Emotions

Talking about emotions helps your child understand their own as well as others' feelings, which is an important part of learning to take the perspective of others.

What you could say:

“I feel excited when the leaves first start to change in the fall since it reminds me that it's time to go apple picking! How do you feel when the leaves start to fall?”

Predict

When you encourage your child to think about what will happen next, you help her think and talk about events beyond the present moment and also use what she already knows to talk about the future.

What you could say:

“What do you think will happen to all these leaves on the ground?”

Pretend/Imagine

Encouraging your child to imagine themselves in a new or unfamiliar situation builds empathy and helps them understand others’ perspectives.

What you could say:

“What do you think it would be like to be a leaf falling from the tree?”

Problem-solve

Creating opportunities for your child to solve problems encourages her to draw upon her background knowledge and reasoning skills and promotes the use of more complex language.

What you could say:

“Uh-oh, it looks like your pants got all wet from playing in the leaf pile. What should we do?”

More E’s and P’s

Can you think of any other ways you could use the E’s and P’s during fall-related events and activities? Remember, you can use the E’s and P’s in many different activities throughout the day to inspire enjoyable, language-building conversations.

For tips on how you can use the E’s and P’s to build your child’s early literacy skills, take a look at the links below:

- [More Than ABCs: Building the Critical Thinking Skills Your Child Needs for Literacy Success](#)
- [How to Build Literacy at Home](#)