

AGENDA

Fostering Language Development & Adult/Child Interactions

(Local Information, Your Name, Date)

Participant Objectives

In this workshop participants will:

- Gain a deeper understanding of how children develop language and the relationship between language development and thinking
- Learn more ways to promote conversations in the classroom and support children's vocabulary development
- Acquire strategies for developing children's listening and speaking skills throughout the day

1. Opening Activity: Tuning Into Children's Language and Thinking
2. Welcome and Logistics
3. Introducing the Topic: Fostering Language Development and Adult/Child Interactions
4. Activity: Talk in the Classroom
5. Discussion
6. Activity: Listening to Children and The Teacher's Role
7. Discussion
8. Activity: Using New & Interesting Vocabulary Throughout the Day
9. Discussion
10. Closure

If 5 hours, add:

10. Activity: Extending Language with Literature
11. Discussion
12. Closure

Stages of Language Development

Birth – 1

- children play with sounds, babble, and combine sounds
- by 6 months, vocalization includes intonation; responds to own name, and angry and friendly tones
- at about 8 months they comprehend much more language than they can produce and begin to say words (mommy daddy, bye bye, no)

1 – 2

- use one or more words with meaning
- utter sounds with adult intonation as if speaking in sentences
- begin to combine words such as toy fall
- around 18 months, children have a repertoire of words (some say 5 – 20, others 20 – 50)
- use mostly nouns

2 – 3

- dramatic growth in language
- names objects common to own surroundings
- by 2, children use I, me, you (pronouns) but not always correctly; by 3 they have these pronouns
- typically vocabulary grows (some say 150 – 300 words, others from 300 words to 1000 words)
- speak with 2 – 3 word sentences
- lots of play with words, repeating words, making up nonsense words

3 – 4

- increasing accuracy of sentence structure and vocabulary
- adding syntax such as plurals, regular verbs, and past tense (but often with errors such as broked or fishes)

5 – 6

- language sounds more and more like adults
- vocabulary increasing (typically to about 2500 words)
- sometimes difficulty pronouncing certain sounds

Fostering Language Development

- Create an atmosphere in which children hear and use lots of language
- Connect language with pleasure and enjoyment (avoid creating stress around speaking)
- Provide opportunities for children to discriminate and classify sounds (poems, chants, songs, rhymes)
- Expose children to lots of new and rich vocabulary
- Use thematic units to introduce new vocabulary
- Use books to introduce new vocabulary
- Expose children to wordless books that allow children to invent their own stories from the pictures
- Use riddles and jokes with children
- Read poems with children
- Encourage children to listen to others and demonstrate understanding
- Welcome children's use of their native language
- Provide children with opportunities to experience many different functions of language; encourage them to reflect on their feelings, express points of view, summarize events, solve problems, predict outcomes, and generate hypotheses
- Connect language to math; invite children to describe size and amounts, make comparisons, define sets, and explain thinking
- Include many small group, one on one, and child directed learning situations throughout the day
- Promote language in social situations with adults and other children
- Provide reinforcement for language use
- Link language learning to learning centers
- Use pictures in the classroom and have children describe what they see
- Include materials in centers that spark new vocabulary and thinking
- Encourage children to retell stories (of books they've heard as well as stories from their personal experiences)
- Write and talk about class trips
- Use the morning message to encourage vocabulary
- Create class stories
- Summarize the day

Vocabulary Assignment Cards

Note to trainer: cut these into strips and distribute one strip to each group. You can assign two groups to the same setting.

BLOCKS

INVENTION CENTER

COOKING

SNACK OR LUNCH

WEATHER AND CALENDAR

LIBRARY

DRAMATIC PLAY

SCIENCE CENTER
DISCOVERY CENTER

ART AREA

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary refers to the words we must know to communicate effectively.

There are two types of vocabulary:

- oral vocabulary - the words used in speaking or recognized when listening
- reading vocabulary - the words recognized or used in print

Vocabulary plays an important part in learning to read. As beginning readers, children use words they have heard to make sense of words they see in print. For example, a beginning reader comes to the word **apple** in a book. As she begins to figure out the sounds represented by the letters, the reader recognizes that the sounds make up a very familiar word that she has heard and said many times. Beginning readers have more difficulty reading words that aren't part of their oral vocabulary.

Vocabulary is also important to reading comprehension. Readers can't understand what they're reading without knowing what most of the words mean. As children learn to read more advanced texts, they must learn the meaning of new words that are not part of their oral vocabulary.

What teachers can do to support children's vocabulary development:

- Engage children in meaningful, extended conversations every day.
- Encourage children to talk and think.
- Read texts aloud that include rich and challenging vocabulary.
- Read aloud from story books and informational books.
- Talk about books with children.
- Use new, interesting and colorful words with children.
- Use a variety of words for common objects (trash, garbage, litter).
- Teach important, useful, and difficult words.
- Talk with children about synonyms and definitions.
- Expose children to age-appropriate dictionaries and other reference aids.
- Encourage curiosity about words.
- Help children see relationships between and among words, ideas, and objects.
- Highlight for children concept words, important words, and interesting words as they appear in books and everyday interactions.
- Help children link new words to familiar words and using new words frequently.