Parent Handouts:
Language Intervention Activities
Preverbal-Preintentional

General Language Strategies

**Learning to Talk**

Children learn to talk by hearing others talk to them. You can help your child learn to talk.

**Things to do and say**

♦ focus on the same thing
  • watch your child; talk about what he or she looks at
  • move objects into your child’s view to talk about them

♦ follow your child’s lead
  • imitate your child’s movements
  • imitate your child’s sounds

♦ have pretend conversations

♦ talk about your child’s sounds and movements

♦ set up a regular daily schedule
  • for eating
  • for bathing
  • for reading
  • for napping
  • for playing

♦ use similar words each time you play with, feed, bathe, and read with your child

♦ make positive comments
  • You’re such a good baby
  • What a happy boy/girl!

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Talk During Feeding

Babies spend much of their time eating and sleeping. Feeding time is a great time to talk to your baby.

Positioning
- hold your baby in a usual feeding position
- hold your baby so he/she faces you
- make eye contact with your baby

What to say
- have a conversation
  - Example: Are you hungry? Yes, you’re a hungry baby.
- talk about your baby’s eating and movement
  - Example: Look at you eat. You are really eating fast.
Talk While Diapering

Many things happen during diapering. Talk during diapering helps your baby connect words to the things that are going on.

Talk about what you are doing

♦ Example
  • I’m going to change your diaper.
  • I’m taking off your dirty diaper.
  • I’m cleaning you up.
  • I’m getting a clean diaper.
  • I’m putting on the clean diaper.
  • Now I’m done.

Talk about what your baby is doing

♦ Example
  • Oh, you don’t like that dirty diaper.
  • You’re such a wiggle worm.
  • I see you looking at me.
  • I hear you talking to me.
  • You like that clean diaper, don’t you?
Talk While Bathing

Bathtime is another good time to talk to your baby. Soothing talk and touching your baby is calming and pleasant.

Before bathing
- make sure the water is warm (not hot or cold).
- have everything ready before putting your baby in the tub (soap, washcloth, towels, clean diaper and clothes, etc.)

Talk or sing as you bathe your baby

Example
- It’s bathtime. I’m putting you in the water.
- Oh, that feels nice, doesn’t it? Yes, it’s nice.
- I’m washing your hands.
- I’m washing your toes.
  (Sing: “This is the way we wash our . . . toes, hands, etc.”)
- What wiggly toes
- I’m rubbing your tummy.
- What do I wash now? (watch child’s movements)
- Oh, wash your fingers.
- All done. What a nice clean baby!
Preverbal-Intentional

General Language Strategies

Helping Vocalizations Become Words

Pointing, showing and making sounds lead to words. You can help your child learn words.

What to do and say

♦ show interest in what your child is playing with or looking at
♦ talk about what your child is doing
♦ imitate your child’s movements and sounds
♦ turn your child’s sounds into words
  ♦ “buhbuh” -> “Yes, bubbles”

♦ read every day with your child
♦ let your child begin to explore writing and drawing
♦ play word games
♦ spend time outside playing, talking, and working
Communicative Temptations

Setting up activities that require your child to talk or gesture will increase his or her communication.

What is communicative temptation?
- any activity in which your child wants or needs something

What to do?
- show your child something, then put the object out of reach or out of view
- wait for your child to request the object (vocalize, reach, etc.)

Example:
- begin eating a snack in front of your child
- wait to see if your child indicates he or she wants some
- if your child holds out his or her hand, then give your child small portion
- Comment: “Oh, you want some ___.”
- if the child holds out his or her hand for more food, say, “More?” or “Cookie?” and wait for your child to vocalize.
- repeat or restate “More” or “Cookie” following your child’s vocalization
- give the child another small bite
- avoid making your child cry or fuss

Other Activities
1. place a toy in a container with a tightly fitting lid; hand it to your child
2. blow bubbles, then put the lid on, wait
3. start a game of peek-a-boo, then stop
4. hand your child blocks, one-at-a-time, to put in a box; then stop and wait.

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Bathtime Language
Bathtime is a good time to learn new words. Body parts, common objects, and simple actions can be learned naturally.

Talk about objects and actions
♦ ask questions
  • Where’s the soap?
  • What do we need?
♦ make simple comments
  • bubbles
  • water
  • splashing
  • all clean

Talk about body parts
♦ ask questions
  • Wash feet or tummy now?
  • What should we wash now?
  • Where’s your nose?
♦ make comments
  • wash your toes
  • clean those ears
♦ play simple word games
  • find your nose
  • show me your hair
  • point to your eyes
Preverbal-Intentional Language Activity #6

**Explore Books**

Children learn words from books. Read and talk about the same book with your child every day.

**Book selection**
- pick sturdy books children can chew and bang.
- pick books with familiar objects: toys, clothes, pets, food, dishes, etc.
- select books that have simple pictures (one object per page)
- select books that have interesting textures to touch or feel

**What to do and say**
- point to and name the pictures
  - Look, that’s a car.
  - The car goes vroom… (move the book like a car)
  - The doggie goes, woof, woof
- allow your child to explore the book (chew, bang, etc.)
- allow your child to flip through the pages and touch the pictures
- comment on your child’s actions
  - You really like that kitty.
  - Comb your hair.

**Image:**
A photograph of a man and a child engaged in reading a book.
Explore Writing and Drawing

Learning to write begins with actions using writing materials

Writing Materials
♦ pick writing utensils that are large and easy to hold
  • large crayons
  • non-toxic markers
  • brushes, fingers, toes

♦ Use a variety of paper
  • large and sheets of various colors
  • old newspaper
  • paper bags
  • old cards

What to do
♦ trace your child’s body on large paper and allow child to fill in with paint, marker, crayon

♦ paint at various angles
  • table top
  • easel with brush or finger paints
  • chalk drawings on sidewalk

♦ make handprints or footprints with fingerpaint
First Words

General Language Strategies

Learning New Words

As children explore their world, inside and out, they need new words to talk about all they see, touch, taste, smell, and hear.

W hat to do
- physical activities
  - climbing
  - playing ball
  - dancing
- turn-taking games
- reading
- writing/drawing
- problem-solving activities
  - stacking rings
  - building blocks
- exploring other environments
  - park
  - library
  - farm
  - zoo

W hat to say
- Ask open-ended questions
  - What do you see?
  - What should we do?
- Model short sentences
  - Go up.
  - Big jump
- Offer choices
  - Up or down?
  - One or two?
  - Eat or drink?
- Give part of a sentence
  - Look at the _____.
  - It’s a big ______.
- Reword or repeat child’s words
Language Activity #8

Talk While Getting Dressed

Toddlers want to control things around them. Help your child make choices about what to wear.

Before dressing

♦ get clothes ready for your child
♦ select two outfits for your child
  • jeans or shorts; pants or skirt
  • different colors: blue or red
  • different designs: stripes or checks
  • different footwear: shoes or sandals
♦ put the outfits side-by-side
  (at child’s eye level and within reach)

What to say

♦ Tell your child what you are going to do.
  • Example: We’re going to the store.

♦ Offer choices
  • Example: What should we wear? Your red or your blue outfit? (show your child the choices) You Picked the red one. Pants or shirt first? Now what?

♦ Talk about body parts
  • Example: Put your arm in. Where’s that foot?
Talk During Toy Play

Play is a child’s work. Children play to learn new things, new words, new roles (Mommy, Daddy, worker, etc.) Talk helps your child learn new things.

Toy selection

♦ pick toys that are easy to hold onto

♦ pick toys that allow role-playing (dolls & clothes, cooking sets, play foods, blocks, farm set, cars and people)

♦ avoid toys that children simply watch

What to say

♦ Example 1 (block party)
  What should we make?
  A house. That sounds good.
  Do you need a red or blue block.

♦ Example 2 (cooking)
  Let’s make dinner.
  What should we make?
  Chicken or hamburgers?
  Yum, I like hamburgers.
  You’re making a big hamburger.
First Words

Language Activity #10

Talk During Reading

Reading is the most important activity for helping your child learn language. Read every day with your child.

Book Selection

- simple pictures
- everyday activities
  - eating
  - dressing
  - bathing
- words name or describe objects
  - foods
  - clothing
  - bath supplies/bath toys
  - caring for baby

What to do and say

- read or talk about the same book (every day for at least a week)
  - first reading:
    - point to the pictures
    - name the objects and people
    - let your child point to pictures
    - ask: What do you see?
  - second reading:
    - ask: What’s happening here?
    - name and describe objects and actions
    - demonstrate actions (pretend to eat)
    - encourage animal or motor sounds
  - each rereading:
    - find out what your child remembers
    - Who/What is that?
    - How does the doggie go?
    - Where’s the spoon?

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Language Activity #11

Talk During Writing

Writing begins with scribbling. Write and scribble with your child. Talk about writing and read your child’s scribbles.

Writing materials
- pick large crayons or pencils
- use different colored papers
- use paper with and without lines
- use old cards, envelopes, and letters

What to do and say
- write with your child; talk as you write
  Example: I’m writing a letter. Now I’m making a heart.
- talk about your child’s writing; point to his or her writing
  Example: You’re writing words. You wrote Cece. What a great line!
First Words

Language Activity #12

Learning to Take Turns

Learning to take turns is important for conversation. Simple turn-taking games help your child learn this skill.

Turn-taking games

♦ hide-and-seek  
  (variation of peek-a-boo)
♦ pat-a-cake
♦ “This little piggy”
♦ playing ball (roll, toss, bounce)

What to do and say

♦ hide objects for your child to find
  • say: Where’s the ____? or Find the ____?

♦ play pat-a-cake
  • stop and wait for your child to finish the line (fill in if child doesn’t)
  Examples:
  - Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker’s _____. Bake me a cake as fast as you ____.

♦ play “This little piggy”
  • stop at times and wait
  Example
  This little piggy went _____. (fill in if child doesn’t)

♦ take turns playing ball
  • say: “Roll to me”; “My turn”; “Whose turn?”; “Roll or bounce?”

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Language Activity #13

Early Cooking Experiences
Children learn many things from cooking, such as following directions, sequencing, math words (add), fine motor actions, etc.

What to do and say

♦ make simple, no-cooking recipes using plastic utensils
  • instant pudding
  • cereal mix

♦ include your child in the whole process
  • locating all needed items
  • adding ingredients
  • mixing
  • eating

♦ help your child gather items
  Say: We need a bowl.
  We need milk
  Where’s the cereal?

♦ help your child scoop, stir, pour, etc.
  Say: One scoop
  Pour in.
  Mix up.

♦ help your child clean up
  Say: All done
  Time to clean up.
  Dishes in the sink...

♦ eat what you make
  Say: Yum, tastes good.

First Words
Language Activity #14

Learning Math Words

Toddlers learn about math throughout the day. Help your child learn new math words.

What to do and say

♦ sort and describe objects by actions
  • things to bang, roll, stack

♦ play sequencing games
  • This little piggy
  • Where is Thumbkin
  • Itsy Bitsy Spider

♦ talk about quantities
  • Can I have one?
  • Want more?
  • One spoon

♦ begin counting
  (count motor actions)
  • walking/crawling up or down stairs
  • taking bites (one - two bites)

♦ explore numbers
  • manipulate plastic or wooden numerals
  • name the numerals
  (do not expect child to repeat - only notice)