



Supporting American Indian Preschoolers' Oral Language Development for Kindergarten Readiness

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Today's Workshop Topics



- Preschool Oral Language Development – Evidence*
- Preschool Oral Language Development – Strategies
- American Indian Preschoolers – Dual Language Learners
 - Challenges, Learning Styles, Strategies
- Crosswalk – NELP*, CLASS, and Head Start Child Outcomes
- Observing Oral Language Behaviors in the Classroom

*National Early Literacy Panel Report, 2008



What is Oral Language?



- The ability to produce and comprehend spoken language (NELP*, 2008, p. 43)
- A broad construct consisting of a variety of discrete language skills such as *expressive and receptive vocabulary, grammar, definitional vocabulary, syntax, and listening comprehension.*

*NELP = The National Early Literacy Panel Report, 2008

<http://familieslearning.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/nelp-report.pdf>



What is Oral Language?



- Skills associated with speaking and listening
- Ability to understand the meaning of, and use of, appropriate words; to group them into phrases and sentences following standard organizational rules (grammar); and that communicate a message to others.



Addressing the Word Gap:

- By the age of 3, children born into low-income families hear roughly 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers.
 - Hart & Risley (1995) – Meaningful Differences
 - Dana Suskind, M.D. (2015) – 30 Million Words

The most important thing we can do for young children is to have conversations with them.

Preschool Oral Language Development - Evidence



It's not culture or ethnicity - it's poverty

- Low SES families talk mostly about daily concerns
 - Results in children hearing and speaking only concrete or functional language (Nelson, 2010)
 - “Business talk” (Hart & Risley, 1995))

Let's clarify: Poverty doesn't cause children to have poor or delayed language skills - but the circumstances around the poverty situation create the behaviors in families that affect language.



Preschool Oral Language Development - Evidence



Effects of poverty on oral and literate language development (Nelson, 2010)

- Generational poverty affects a family for two generations or longer
- Language characteristics associated with low-SES background
- Health care, nutrition, ear infections can affect language
- Correlation between adult education levels and income - most highly related is mother's educational level.
- Caretakers with little formal education.



Preschool Oral Language Development - Evidence



Family and Child Education Program Example:

- 2015 Evaluation Report
- 400 Preschool children enrolled in programs in 42 sites, 10 reservations
- 116 children identified with IEP
- 79% of those identified were for speech and language delays
- 3% visual, 5% health impairment, 2% hearing impaired



Preschool Oral Language Development – Evidence



- The [National Early Literacy Panel Report](#) summarized the scientific evidence on early literacy development and on home and family influences on that development.
- An empirical study in which data was collected, analyzed, and evaluated in an objective and systematic way to answer specified research questions.



Preschool Oral Language Development - Evidence



- The research questions:
 - What are the skills and abilities of young children (age birth - five years) that predict later reading, writing, or spelling outcomes?
 - Which programs, interventions, instructional approaches have contributed to later outcomes in reading, writing or spelling?
 - What environments and settings have contributed to gains linked to later outcomes in reading, writing, and spelling?
 - What child characteristics are linked to later outcomes in reading, writing, or spelling?



Preschool Oral Language Development - Evidence



The NELP:

- Identified the evidence about building children's language and literacy skills in the preschool period
- Identified the early skills that give children the strongest foundation for learning to read, spell, and write.

RESULTS: The precursor skills with instructional evidence are:

- Alphabet Knowledge
- Phonological Awareness
- Writing/Name Writing
- Oral Language Development



Preschool Oral Language Development - Evidence



Key Findings from NELP Regarding Oral Language

- NELP found that *combining several of these skills together had the strongest relationship with later reading comprehension.*
- An instructional focus that combines *teaching many oral language skills together will have greater impact* than a focus on any single oral language skill.
- *Vocabulary is foundational, but vocabulary instruction must be accompanied by more complex oral language skills* for young children to become successful readers.



So let's look at some of
those strategies.



Preschool Oral Language Development – Strategies & Skills



- Questions/Prompts
- Conversations/Narrative Talk
- Providing Feedback
- Providing Information
- Dialogic Reading



Preschool Oral Language Development – Strategies & Skills



Questions/Prompts	Child Outcomes
Open-ended, 'Wh—' questions	<p data-bbox="933 458 1649 662">Goal P-LIT 5. Child asks and answers questions about a book that was read aloud.</p> <p data-bbox="933 762 1721 966">Goal P-ATL 11. Child shows interest in and curiosity about the world around them.</p>
Completion questions	
Distancing questions	
Recall questions	



Preschool Oral Language Development – Strategies & Skills



Conversations/Narrative Talk	Child Outcomes
Frequent Conversational Talk	Goal P-LC 1. Child attends to communication and language from others
Turn-taking	Goal P-LC 4. Child understands, follows, and uses appropriate social and conversational rules Goal P-ATL 4. Child manages actions, words, and behavior with increasing independence.
Self Talk	Goal P-ATL 6. Child maintains focus and sustains attention with minimal adult support.
Parallel Talk	

Preschool Oral Language Development – Strategies & Skills



Providing Feedback	Child Outcomes
Listening	Goal P-LC 1. Child attends to communication and language from others. Goal P-LC 4. Child understands, follows, and uses appropriate social and conversational rules
Feedback Loops	
Student Responses	
Clarify	



Preschool Oral Language Development – Strategies & Skills



Provide Information	Child Outcomes
Extend, Elaborate, Expand	Goal P-LC 2. Child understands and responds to increasingly complex communication and language from others.
Introduce new words/ideas. Add vocabulary to conversations.	Goal P-ATL 8. Child holds information in mind and manipulates it to perform tasks.
Define words	Goal P-LC 5. Child expresses self in increasingly long, detailed, and sophisticated ways.
Provide new experiences. Provide background information.	Goal P-LC 3. Child varies the amount of information provided to meet the demands of the situation.
Scaffold and Reinforce	Goal P-LC 7. Child shows understanding of word categories and relationships among words. Goal P-LC 6. Child understands and uses a wide variety of words for a variety of purposes. Goal P-ATL 12. Child expresses creativity in thinking and communication.

Preschool Oral Language Development – Strategies & Skills



Dialogic Reading	Child Outcomes
Questions/Prompts	Goal P-LIT 5. Child asks and answers questions about a book that was read aloud.
Evaluate/Expand	Goal P-LIT 4. Child demonstrates an understanding of narrative structure through storytelling/re-telling.
Repeat/Review/Recall/Reflect	Goal P-LC 6. Child understands and uses a wide variety of words for a variety of purposes. Goal P-LC 2. Child understands and responds to increasingly complex communication and language from others. Goal P-LIT 1. Child demonstrates awareness that spoken language is composed of smaller segments of sound. Goal P-LIT 2. Child demonstrates an understanding of how print is used (functions of print) and the rules that govern how print works (conventions of print). Goal P-LIT 6. Child writes for a variety of purposes using increasingly sophisticated marks.



Preschool Oral Language Development - Strategies & Skills



The research says that children who have been exposed to dialogic reading:

- Show gains in language development
- Have larger vocabularies
- Are better able to identify sounds and letters
- Show stronger emergent writing skills
- Have an enhanced knowledge of print
- Gains are retained over time



The power of conversation



What is Dialogic Reading?

- A conversation about a story
- Ask questions
- Builds vocabulary
- Builds expressive language



Who Benefits?

- Older toddlers/preschool children
- Research with 3-5 year old children in child care
- Can younger children benefit?
- Can older children benefit?



Preschool Oral Language Development – Strategies & Skills



- C** Completion questions
- R** Recall questions
- O** Open-ended questions
- W** “Wh” questions
- D** Distancing questions



- Prompt the child
- Evaluate the response
- Expand what child said
- Repeat – say it again



Family and Child Education (FACE)

- Center-based staff and parents both trained to implement the *dialogic reading process*.
- Staff modeled the reading technique for parents.
- Parents were given opportunities everyday to read with their children and have conversations about the books.
- Books encouraged children and parents to talk about the story and make connections to their lives.
- Significant gains were made in expressive vocabulary



Preschool Oral Language Development - Evidence



- EOWPVT - Expressive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test - 3X annually - since 2003
- Year after year, FACE children *significantly and meaningfully* increased expressive language performance, scoring as much as 2 standard scores above the national average.
- Growth as much as from 11th to 47th percentile in some years (pre- to post-test)



Let's build from what we know....

HO Definitions and Strategies



CLASS – Language Modeling	NELP – Oral Language	DIALOGIC READING
Frequent Conversations	Narrative Talk	Dialogue
Open-ended Questions	Questions	Prompts*
Repetition and Extension	Scaffolding	Expand and Repeat
Self- and Parallel Talk		
Advanced Language		
	Modeling	
	Feedback	Evaluate and Expand

***Completion, Open-ended, 'Wh' questions, Recall, Distancing**



Questions?



Thank You



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Embedding Oral Language Activities into Daily Experiences

Teachers build young children’s vocabulary using *scaffolding* and *narrative talk*. Here are examples of how teachers can implement these instructional strategies with children.

Before a child is talking, use narrative talk in the following ways:

- **Model early words.** When a child babbles early sounds (such as saying “ah”), make eye contact with the child and respond by repeating the sound and introducing a second sound (/m/), then combining both to say a simple two-syllable word, *ma-ma* (Hamilton, 1977).
- **Use parallel talk.** Describe what the child is doing in simple terms: “Hug the bunny” or “Eat the cracker” (Robertson & Weismer, 1999).
- **Attach a label (name) to an object or an action.** Teach the word “dog” by saying, “Dog. Here’s the dog.” Use comments such as “Good dog” or “Pat the dog” or “The dog is barking.” Repeating the word many times in response to the child’s interest or activity develops familiarity with the word in a meaningful context (Girolametto, Pearce, & Weitzman, 1996).
- **Practice self talk.** “Think aloud” to describe whatever you are thinking or doing. “I’m going to change your diaper. First we take off the wet one and then put on a dry one.” This is a simple strategy to support the development of vocabulary and grammar.

When a child is beginning to talk, add these activities to those described above as ways to use scaffolding and narrative talk to improve oral language skills:

- **Expand language.** Expand on a child’s simple word. When a child says “gog” (referring to a dog), respond by saying “The dog barks” or “Furry dog.” (Robertson & Weismer, 1999).
- **Recast.** Repeat the child’s words and expand them into a complete sentence. If a child says “more dink” or “eat,” add more information – “You want more juice to drink, don’t you?” or “That’s right. The very hungry caterpillar is eating through the apple.” (Robertson & Weismer, 1999).

As a child begins to string words together, continue to use scaffolding and narrative talk by adding the following activities to those described above:

- **Expand language.** Expand on a child’s words. When a child utters a word or phrase, such as “Read me” while handing over a book, expand by saying “Good idea! Let’s read this book about animals and how in the jungle.” Encourage the child to repeat the additional information by



saying, “What is this book about?” and the child might respond, “Animals in the jungle” (Robertson & Weismer, 1999).

- **Initiate reciprocal communication.** An adult can make a game of observing and catching a child’s eye as he mimics the child’s play using similar materials. When the child initiates another play experience, the adult names materials and describes his actions, encouraging the child to take a turn communicating within the context and safety of “the game.” (Smith & Fluck, 2000). “You are placing the square blocks on top of the building to make it even taller. What block will you use next?”
- **Ask open-ended questions.** Ask questions that have many appropriate responses and encourage narrative conversation on a child’s part. Open-ended questions encourage the use of more complex skills. Open-ended questions might begin with “What if...” or “What might happen...” or “Tell me about...”

Once a child is communicating verbally and pronouncing words correctly...

Combine and apply all of the strategies above to boost oral language proficiency. Add an intentional focus for teaching more complex oral language skills. Look within a variety of contexts for experiences to support oral language skills in meaningful ways.

- **Use complete sentences** when communicating with children and use more complex language, both directly with children and indirectly through overheard conversations with other adults. *Do this across all classroom areas throughout the day.*
- The different contexts **within daily routines and settings** provide opportunities for conversations where adults can scaffold children’s oral language learning, for example:
- At snack and mealtime, initiate conversations about nutrition, ingredients, and food preparation tools that apply new words and expand learning
- Identify the implements used for serving, such as a “ladle” and then later sing the song “Aichen Drum” and ask if anyone remembers what a ladle is.
- In the block area, help children name and even label their airplane garage as a *hangar* and the airport as a *terminal* while helping them understand the definitions of those words.
- Field trips may incorporate new words and uses of words. A visit to the zoo incorporates an entire vocabulary specific to that environment, with names of animals (e.g., specific types of primates, such as baboons and gorillas), animal characteristics (e.g., nocturnal, cold-blooded), and their habitats (e.g., desert, polar). Look within the contexts of all experiences for meaningful ways to boost oral language skills.

Head Start Domains: Sub-domains	Head Start Goals	*NELP Precursor Skills	Language/Literacy Strategies	Parts of the Daily Routine	What you might see or hear.
LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION: <i>Attending and Understanding</i>	Goal P-LC 1. Child attends to communication and language from others	Oral Language (receptive language)	Narrative Talk Turn-Taking Self-Talk Parallel-Talk Completion questions Listening	Arrival/Departure Meal times Centers/Work Time Circle Time	Children respond and add to the conversation. Children introduce new words and phrases. Children listen to talk from others. “Who has the _____?” (holds up object, or points to picture)
	Goal P-LC 2. Child understands and responds to increasingly complex communication and language from others.	Oral Language (expressive language)	Prompts Complete sentences Scaffold Clarify Reinforce	Arrival/Departure Meal times Centers/Work Time Circle Time	Children use vocabulary words in context. Teachers provide hints: “Does it feel hard or soft?” “That’s right. If you mix red and blue paint you will get purple.” “What do all of the things in this box have in common?”
LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION: <i>Communication and Speaking</i>	Goal P-LC 3. Child varies the amount of information provided to meet the demands of the situation.	Oral Language	Frequent conversations Scaffold Reinforce Narrative Talk	Arrival/Departure Transitions Meal Times Center Time	“Hi Jimmy. How was your bus ride?” “You saw a deer in the field? Oh, let’s sit down and you can tell me more.” “I’ll give you a clue. It’s almost like a _____.”
	Goal P-LC 4. Child understands, follows, and uses appropriate social and conversational rules	Oral Language	Turn-Taking Recall	Circle Time Review Time Snack or meal times Small Group Time	Children wait for a response before responding. “After Jim finishes telling us what he did on the playground, it will be your turn to share, Susan.”
	Goal P-LC 5. Child expresses self in increasingly long, detailed, and sophisticated ways.	Oral Language	Distancing and Recall Prompts Complete Sentences More words	Recall Time (after centers or large group)	“Candy, can you tell me more about that dance you were doing in the gym?” “This is what we were talking about last week when we learned about Rocky Mountains. Remember?” “Let’s use more words. Let’s say it in a sentence.”
LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION: <i>Vocabulary</i>	Goal P-LC 6. Child understands and uses a wide variety of words for a variety of purposes.	Oral Language	Respond to children’s queries Clarify new words Provide information Introduce new words	Circle Time Read Aloud Time Center Time Small Group Time	“What could you say to Tim to let him know that you want a turn?” “Let’s use our imaginations. Remember when we talked about the word imagination yesterday?” “That’s right. Imagination is the same as ‘pretending’.”
	Goal P-LC 7. Child shows understanding of word categories and relationships among words	Oral Language	PEER Process Extend and elaborate	Circle Time Read Aloud Time All parts of the day	Use of CROWD Prompts. <i>Completion</i> : “The sky is falling. The sky is _____.” <i>“Wh”</i> : “What is happening in this picture?” <i>Open-ended</i> : “I wonder what she is thinking?”

Head Start Domains: Sub-domains	Head Start Goals	*NELP Precursor Skills	Language/Literacy Strategies	Parts of the Daily Routine	What you might see or hear.
					<i>Distancing:</i> “Do you remember when we visited the fire house?” <i>Recall:</i> “Let’s think back to the beginning of the book. What was did Goldilocks do first?”
LITERACY: <i>Phonological Awareness</i>	Goal P-LIT 1. Child demonstrates awareness that spoken language is composed of smaller segments of sound.	Phonological Awareness	Chants Rhymes Songs Nonsense words Games that play with sounds	Circle Time Transitions Small Group Time	Children sing: <i>The Name Game</i> (Banana fana fo fana) Children make up nonsense words during small group – silly willy hilly dilly crilly pilly poo! Children do fingerplays while waiting in line for lunch.
LITERACY: <i>Print and Alphabet Knowledge</i>	Goal P-LIT 2. Child demonstrates an understanding of how print is used (functions of print) and the rules that govern how print works (conventions of print).	Alphabet Knowledge	Books and letters in all areas of the classroom Dialogic Reading Frequent Read Alouds Print in the classroom Refer to punctuation marks and parts of a sentence	Circle Time Large Group Times Small Group Times Center Times Arrival Times	“Look, there is a question mark at the end of this sentence.” (points to question mark) “Why is this page called the title page of the book?” (points to page and words) Teacher points to elements of print while reading aloud. Teacher asks questions about text and illustrations. “Jeff, come point to the place on the page where I am going to start reading.”
	Goal P-LIT 3. Child identifies letters of the alphabet and produces correct sounds associated with letters.	Alphabet Knowledge Phonological Awareness	Relate letter name to letter shape to letter sound Blending, deleting sounds Recognizing syllables, parts of words	Circle Time Transitions Small Group Time	“I have an H. Who has a G?” “What word starts with G?” “How does that G sound?” Children follow song/dance program on Smart board identifying letters and sounds.
LITERACY: <i>Comprehension and Text Structure</i>	Goal P-LIT 4. Child demonstrates an understanding of narrative structure through storytelling/re-telling.	Oral Language Alphabet Knowledge	Use more words Complete sentences Recall and distancing Illustrations and props Prediction Expand/Elaborate Follow-up questions	Arrival Meals/Snacks Read Aloud Times Circle Time Small Group Time	Teacher calls on child. “Olivia, what do you think will happen next in the story?” Children manipulate magnetic letters on white board during small group to make words (invented spelling) Teacher uses child’s words to expand and elaborate on the discussion. “Tell me again how he felt when he went in the house?” “How do you know that?”
	Goal P-LIT 5. Child asks and answers questions about a book that was read aloud.	Oral Language	Dialogic Reading PEER process Recall/Repeat/Review Scaffolding Feedback Loops	Small and Large Group Times Center Recall Time	Children respond and guide the conversation. Teachers clarify and confirm. Children add to the conversation with new words. Children look at and interact with books on their own, share with other children.

Head Start Domains: Sub-domains	Head Start Goals	*NELP Precursor Skills	Language/Literacy Strategies	Parts of the Daily Routine	What you might see or hear.
LITERACY: <i>Writing</i>	Goal P-LIT 6. Child writes for a variety of purposes using increasingly sophisticated marks.	Alphabet Knowledge Writing	Provide materials for fine motor skill development Accept children's writing Write children's words Know the stages of writing development Active Learning (Materials, Manipulatives, Choice, Support, Language)	Center Time (Art and Block Areas) Small Group Times	A writing center exists in the classroom. Writing materials are available throughout the classroom learning areas. Children draw, scribble and write with many different writing utensils during Center Time. Children play with clay, punchers, pipe cleaners, glue, scissors, tear paper, etc. to work fine muscles of hands and fingers. Children practice writing name, perhaps by signing in each day (scribbles are accepted!) Children sign their name to their art work (scribbles are accepted!)

Oral Language Strategies Observation	CLASS Assessment Connections	√ if Observed	Head Start Child Outcomes	Notes
Questions/Prompts	Prompting Through Processes		Goal P-LIT 5. Child asks and answers questions about a book that was read aloud.	
Open-ended/Wh—	Questions require more than a one-word response; Queries responses and actions		Goal P-ATL 11. Child shows interest in and curiosity about the world around them.	
Completion	Student Responds; Repeats			
Distancing	Queries responses and actions			
Recall	Student Responds; Repeats			
Provide Feedback	Feedback Loops; Specific feedback; Persistence by teacher		Goal P-LC 1. Child attends to communication and language from others.	
Listen	Contingent responding (relevant questions and responses)			
Feedback Loops	Back and forth exchanges			
Student Response	Contingent responding			
Clarify	Follow-up questions; clarification			
Conversation/Narrative Talk	Frequent Conversations		Goal P-LC 1. Child attends to communication and language from others	
Frequent Conversations	Contingent responding; Peer conversations		Goal P-LC 4. Child understands, follows, and uses appropriate social and conversational rules	
Turn-taking	Back-and-forth exchanges		Goal P-ATL 4. Child manages actions, words, and behavior with increasing independence.	
Self-talk	Maps own actions with language		Goal P-ATL 6. Child maintains focus and sustains attention with minimal adult support.	
Parallel-talk	Maps student action with language			
Dialogic Reading	Queries responses and actions		Goal P-LIT 5. Child asks and answers questions about a book that was read aloud.	
Prompt	Open-ended questions; Queries responses and actions		Goal P-LIT 4. Child demonstrates an understanding of narrative structure through storytelling/re-telling.	
Evaluate/Expand	Recognition; Clarification; Expansion			
Repeat/Review/Reflect/Recall	Repetition and Extension; Repeats			
Provide Information	Providing Information; Advanced Language		Goal P-LC 2. Child understands and responds to increasingly complex communication and language from others.	
Extend/Elaborate/Expand	Expansion; Extends/Elaborates; Ask students to explain thinking		Goal P-ATL 8. Child holds information in mind and manipulates it to perform tasks.	
Introduce new words/ideas; Add vocabulary to conversations	Variety of words; Connected to familiar words and/or ideas		Goal P-LC 3. Child varies the amount of information provided to meet the demands of the situation.	
Define words; Definitional vocabulary			Goal P-LC 7. Child shows understanding of word categories and relationships among words	
Provide new experiences; Provide background knowledge			Goal P-LC 6. Child understands and uses a wide variety of words for a variety of purposes.	
Scaffold and Reinforce	Scaffolding; Hints and Assistance; Reinforcement		Goal P-ATL 12. Child expresses creativity in thinking and communication.	
Persistence, Recognition, Affirmation	Persistence by teacher (feedback loops); Student persistence; Encouragement and Affirmation; Recognition		Goal P-ATL 7. Child persists in tasks.	