



Coaching for Interactions that Support Enhanced Language Development

Focus of this Video

- Why enhancing children's language development is important.
- What enhancing children's language skills looks like.
- Coaching strategies for this interaction.



Why Enhancing Children's Language Development is Important



Language is a form of communication—two or more people sharing thoughts, feelings, or ideas.

When adults engage children in conversation it supports their development in these ways:

- **Language development:** Introduces children to new vocabulary, and helps them communicate more clearly and accurately.
- **Social and emotional development:** Helps children communicate their intentions, thoughts and emotions.
- **Cognitive development:** Encourages children's learning of new concepts and skills.

IMPORTANCE OF HOME LANGUAGE

- Because language and culture are closely related, one of the primary tasks for young children is to learn and retain their home language(s).
- Young children often learn multiple languages at the same time.
- It's important for educators to adjust their expectations for children's language development when they're learning multiple languages at once.
- It's critically important for young children to continue using their home language when they learn English so they can communicate with their families.
- There is a window of opportunity during childhood for children to be exposed to native speakers (their families).
- Language loss occurs when children are only using English in place of their home language.

What Enhancing Children's Language Looks Like:

- Engaging in back and forth exchanges or conversations with children
- Asking questions that extend conversations
- Using self-talk and parallel talk
- Using novel words



ENGAGING IN BACK AND FORTH EXCHANGES

In the context of child language development, back-and-forth interactions refer to the reciprocal and responsive communication between a child and their caregiver or conversation partner.

It involves taking turns to share sounds, gestures, words, and sentences in a continuous flow of conversation.

RESEARCH ON BACK AND FORTH EXCHANGES

A new study has shown that the more children participate in back-and-forth interactions with their caregivers, the more activity they have in the part of the brain responsible for language production and processing.

The study also showed a strong connection between the number of turns children take in conversation and the scores they receive on standardized language tests [1,2].

The more children are involved in back-and-forth exchanges, the greater the impact on their language skills.

[MIT News on Campus and Around the World: Back-and-forth exchanges boost children's brain response to language](#)

ASKING QUESTIONS THAT EXTEND CONVERSATIONS

For questions to be successful in extending conversation, the questions need to be meaningful and interesting to children.

For children of any age:

- Ask children what they are doing.
- Children become more aware of their actions when they communicate what they are engaged in.
- Ask children to connect learning to their own lives.
- These connections help children think beyond the classroom context and apply their learning to another environment.



MORE ON ASKING QUESTIONS

For older infants, toddlers, and preschoolers:

- Ask children to make predictions.
- These questions promote higher-level thinking, and encourage children to think beyond the present and anticipate what might happen next.
- Ask children to explain something or solve a problem (why and how questions).
- Asking children why and how questions gives them opportunities to communicate their thinking process and share their opinions.

USING SELF TALK

In **self-talk** the educator intentionally describes what he or she is thinking, seeing, hearing, touching or doing.

In other words, you're linking words to actions:

“I’m giving each of you a handful of animal crackers. I am placing the crackers in a pile in the center of your napkins.”

You're saying these words as you actively pass out the snack, making words like, “handful,” “placing,” and “pile” come alive for the children.



MORE ON USING SELF TALK

When educators engage in self-talk they use words/concepts that children know and can understand.

Self-talk is NOT simply using “I” statements, such as, “I am going to tour the zoo tomorrow and I will feed a giraffe! I love giraffes.”

Why would statements like this be less effective?

In this example, a child may not know the word “tour” or “giraffe.”

These words are said in an abstract way and not made concrete by mapping them to what the child can currently see or experience.



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USING PARALLEL TALK

In parallel talk, the teacher links words directly to children’s current actions or experiences.

For example, “You are holding the zipper and zipping your jacket all the way up to your chin.”

Educators using parallel talk become a sportscaster, narrating a play-by-play account of what the child is seeing, feeling, or doing, making words personalized and meaningful.

MORE ON USING PARALLEL TALK



Parallel talk is NOT simply using a “you” statement, such as, “You did a good job painting your picture.”

Parallel talk is more effective when you connect it with what the child is doing not what the child already did.

Why? Because this comment refers to something that happened in the past and does not promote the more powerful connection between a child’s real-time experiences and the language that describes these moments in rich, memorable detail.

USING NOVEL WORDS

Adults can support rich language acquisition by infants and toddlers in a variety of ways: by looking at and labeling what children focus on, using unusual and interesting words, repeating words, pairing familiar words with unfamiliar ones, and explaining the meaning and uses of words.

For children of all ages, conversations that introduce them to novel words:

- Increase their receptive and expressive vocabularies.
- Help them acquire the language they need to express their ideas and feelings.

Coaching an Educator on Enhancing Children's Language Development

Start with a few good questions:

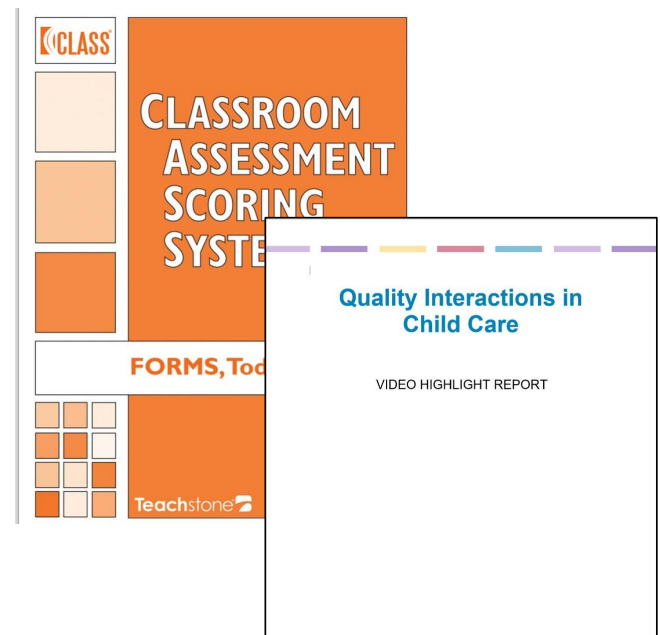
- How do you feel you're doing with supporting and enhancing children to develop their language skills?
- What challenges do you experience in providing enhanced language for children?
- When do you think the best time is during your day to provide opportunities that enhance children's language skills?
- What more do you want to know about this teaching practice?



What Data to Focus On for This Interaction

What to look at:

- "Enhanced Language" data field in the QUIC tool.
- "Language Modeling" sections of the CLASS tools.
- All areas that address individualizing for children.



Observing An Educator Enhancing Children's Language Skills

- You can observe an educator's practice by doing a focused observation during different times of the day and different activities.
- The focus or measurable component is noticing how and when the educator uses different strategies such as engaging in back and forth exchanges with children; asking questions; uses self and parallel talk, or uses novel words.
- The exemplar videos illustrate an educator engaged in this teaching practice.

What to Look For In A Focused Observation For This Interaction

Some examples of enhancing children's language development include:



INSTRUCTIVE SESSION

- Some educators may not understand what it means to use strategies that enhance a child's language development and need more specific information about what it looks like and how to do it.
- You can provide an instructive coaching session to help the educator gain a better understanding of the practice to be able to implement it with children.
- Start by sharing information about these four strategies: engaging in back and forth exchanges; asking questions to extend conversations; using self and parallel talk and using novel words



INSTRUCTIVE SESSION CONTINUED

Next, you can show the informational video and the exemplar videos we shared with you in this assignment that illustrate and explain the practice.

After viewing the video, ask the coachee:

- What did you learn in the video about enhancing children's language skills?
 - How would you implement the four different strategies for enhancing children's language skills?
 - What more do you need to know about these practices?
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