

Kindergarten Oral Language Development: Attending

Developmental aspects	Emerging With direct support... 	Developing With guided support... 	Applying With minimal support... 	Extending 
The Child	With direct support may listen to and use language for play and collaborative learning. May not have enough language for conversation to be meaningful.	With guided support listens to and is beginning to use language for play and collaborative learning. Is beginning to participate in conversations.	With minimal support uses conventional language for play and collaborative learning. Is able to contribute to conversations.	Adjusts language use for play and collaborative learning. Uses language for a range of purposes and actively contributes to conversations.
Speaking and Listening				
Attending	With direct support may attend to informal oral language interactions.	With guided support attends to and participates in informal language interactions.	With minimal support attends to and participates in informal language interactions.	Attends to and participates in informal language interactions.
The Support/Scaffolding*	The Model: showing, instructing, explaining, directing, making explicit, demonstrating, giving examples	The Coach: structuring, sequencing, focusing, cueing, guiding, organizing, supporting	The Advisor: suggesting, reminding, prompting, monitoring, asking for elaboration	The Mentor: extending, stretching, wondering aloud, exploring, "what if-ing"
*a variety of supports (teachers, peers, environmental, etc.) can be provided at any stage of development				

Scenario: At the beginning of the year, the teacher notices that Alastair usually plays alone during centre time and is reluctant to participate in whole-group activities. He keeps to himself, sometimes sitting under a table or looking out the window. During circle activities he looks at the floor, and when asked a direct question he shakes his head. The teacher wants to build a relationship with Alastair, but is often preoccupied with the more active and unruly students in his class. He decides to implement a twice-weekly buddy experience with the Grade 5 class so that each of his students can have an older role model for informal language interactions. The kindergarten teacher and his colleague prepare the grade 5 students for some simple partner activities involving informal conversation.



Direct Support

Alastair is paired with Mason in a partner activity. Alastair is silent but follows Mason's *example* as they sort some animal figures. Alastair becomes overwhelmed, and goes to stand beside the window. Mason, using direct support, takes two animals over to Alastair and *shows* him their similarities. Mason gently takes Alastair's hand and leads him back to the table while talking to him about his dog.



Guided Support

Alastair is paired with Mason again on the next buddy day. Alastair silently follows Mason's example as they work with some manipulative materials. Mason provides guided support by introducing a topic of conversation that might interest Alastair. He says, "I think I saw you with a big black dog in the park. Is that your dog?" Alastair nods. "I saw him chasing something. Does he like to play ball?" Alastair nods. Mason then tells Alastair that he plays Frisbee with his own dog in the same park. Then Mason asks Alastair the name of his dog. Alastair ducks his head and mutters something. Mason *guides* Alastair to speak more loudly by saying that he wants to know more about Alastair's dog, but can't hear what he has said. He tells Alastair the name of his own dog, and *cues* Alastair to do the same by saying, "Please tell me your dog's name again. I want to say hello when I see him in the park." Alastair repeats the name of his dog more loudly. Mason says, "Will you say 'Hi' to me if you see me at the park?" Alastair nods.



Minimal Support

On the next buddy day, Mason brings a snapshot of his dog. He tells Alastair about how his dog loves to play tag with the cat. He provides minimal support by *prompting* Alastair to participate: "Maybe you could draw me a picture of your own dog and tell me about him." Alastair draws his dog and tells Mason that he is black. The following week, Alastair shyly gives Mason a picture of his dog that he has drawn during centre time. Alastair says, "It's for you. I saw you with your dog." Mason *asks for elaboration*, and Alastair gives a few more details. The teacher notices their conversation, and *suggests* that Alastair and Mason tell the class about their dogs. Mason *prompts* Alastair by mentioning a few things they could say. With minimal support, Alastair is able to say a few short sentences to his classmates.



Without Support

Later that month, the teacher notices Alastair involved in dramatic play with several other children. Without support, Alastair is attending to the other students' make-believe conversation, and when asked by the group he agrees to play the part of the family puppy.



Oral language is especially important in the primary years, since it is critical for communication. It also enables children to build bridges to their emerging literacy and numeracy.