

## Kindergarten Oral Language Development: Staying on Topic

Developmental aspects	Emerging With direct support...	Developing With guided support...	Applying With minimal support...	Extending
<b>The Child</b>	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.
<b>Speaking and Listening</b>				
Staying on topic	With direct support may sometimes stay on topic in a short conversation.	With guided support stays on topic in a short conversation; ; responds to ideas.	With minimal support stays on topic in a conversation; responds and extends ideas.	Stays on topic in conversations; responds and extends ideas.
<b>The Support/Scaffolding*</b>	<b>The Model:</b> showing, instructing, explaining, directing, making explicit, demonstrating, giving examples	<b>The Coach:</b> structuring, sequencing, focusing, cueing, guiding, organizing, supporting	<b>The Advisor:</b> suggesting, reminding, prompting, monitoring, asking for elaboration	<b>The Mentor:</b> 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:** The teacher decides to read Audrey Wood's book titled "Alphabet Mystery" to the class. Before beginning the story, she asks the class if anyone knows what a mystery is. The class conversation leads to the students creating their own oral stories about mysteries based on a well-known TV character, 'Dora the Explorer.' The link to personal experience with Dora deepens the students understanding of the mystery genre.



### Direct Support

During the teacher-led discussion, many students offer ideas about what they think a mystery is. For example, Richard says, "My older brother reads chapter mystery books." Bobby says, "My big brother has a skateboard. He went skateboarding last night down our hill and he fell off and scraped both his knees. Boy, did he howl! My mom had to bring him in the house and clean him up...." Giving direct support, the teacher *explains* that a mystery involves looking for clues to solve a problem or figure out something we don't know. She *gives an example* of when we lose something and don't know where it is. She then asks Bobby if he has ever heard any stories where people were looking for clues to solve a problem. Bobby says, "Yes, I watch 'Blues Clues' on TV and they solve problems all the time."



### Guided Support

The teacher then asks the class for other examples of mystery shows they might know about. Lucinda says, "I like Dora the Explorer. She is on TV and solves problems, too." The teacher provides guided support by *focusing* Lucinda on thinking of an example from the Dora the Explorer TV show. Lucinda tells about a time Dora was looking for a flute. Along the way, she passed a snapping turtle and had to find a way to get past it without getting hurt. The teacher *refocuses* Lucinda by asking her, "What mystery was Dora trying to solve in that show?"



### Minimal Support

The teacher then asks the class if anyone else has seen this episode of 'Dora the Explorer'. Many students respond that they have. Giving minimal support, she then *suggests* that they *elaborate* on the episode by telling about what clues Dora used to help her find the flute.



### Without Support

Rebecca says, "What if Dora went on a treasure hunt with us? She would be able to help us figure out where all the eggs are." Anastasia says, "Yeah, and Dora could help me find my party gifts that my mom hid in the house." Jonathon *wonders aloud*, "I know! What if we all take turns telling our own mystery stories with Dora?" Without support, some of the children carry this topic into their dramatic play and journal writing activities during centre time.



Children learn language through use. Thus, their language reflects their experiences. By talking in a variety of contexts for different purposes, they increase their repertoire of language functions, which in turn enhances their development of vocabulary and language structures.