

Kindergarten Oral Language Development: Understanding And Participating in Language Activities

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.
Knowledge of the Content and Structure of Language				
Understanding and participating in language activities	With direct support may understand classroom language activities (e.g., shared reading, role plays, imaginative play, etc).	With guided support understands and participates in classroom language activities (e.g., shared reading, role plays, imaginative play, etc).	With minimal understands and participates in classroom language activities (e.g., shared reading, role plays, imaginative play, etc).	Understands and actively participates in classroom language activities (e.g., shared reading, role plays, imaginative play, etc).
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: Part way through the kindergarten year, Raj arrives from South Asia with his extended family. He apparently speaks little English. The teacher learns from Raj's grandfather that the family has come from a rural area, and that Raj plays mostly with his brothers and cousins. Although Raj initially is reluctant to participate in classroom activities, the teacher notices immediately that he is drawn to the wheeled toys, trains, and building materials.



Direct Support

Knowing that Raj needs direct support to understand and participate in classroom language activities, the teacher asks a colleague if she can borrow some photographs from his recent trip to South Asia. She also finds some pictures of trains on the Internet. One day when Raj is playing alone with the wooden train set at centre time, she *shows* him the photos, *pointing explicitly* to the trains in each picture. Raj is excited, and begins to speak rapidly in his home language. Seeing that Raj's reluctance to participate is not due to a language delay, the teacher *demonstrates* how to say the English words for "train," "engine," and "rail car" by pronouncing the words carefully and inviting him to repeat them as they point to the pictures. The teacher helps Raj choose a few of the photos to show his classmates during circle time.



Guided Support

Seeing Raj's interest in trains, several other children invite him to help them build a railroad station and village using the wooden train set and blocks. The children are excited when Raj says the word 'train.' Raj then points to the track, and excitedly says the name in his own language. The children tell him the word in English. Raj's classmates provide guided support by pointing out the different parts of the railroad station as they play, *structuring* an informal opportunity for Raj to learn English in context.



Minimal Support

Within a few weeks, Raj begins to participate in other classroom language activities involving manipulative materials. He often chooses to work with unifix cubes. With minimal support, he learns the names of the colours by imitating the other children. The teacher notices that Raj has a strong sense of numbers and patterns. She *prompts* him to join in whenever the class plays counting games.



Without Support

One day, without support, Raj shows the teacher a train he has made with unifix cubes in a repeating pattern. He initiates the conversation by saying, "See my train. Three blue, two yellow, three blue, two yellow, three blue, two yellow." The teacher invites Raj to show his train to the class and to say the pattern for them. She *extends* this opportunity for language by inviting Raj to show other children how to make trains with repeating patterns during math centre time.



For most children, the literacy learning process actually begins with speaking—talking about their experiences, talking about themselves. It is through speech that children learn to organize their thinking and focus their ideas....The neglect of oral language in the classroom will destroy that foundation and severely hinder the development of other aspects of language skills.