

Kindergarten Oral Language Development: Taking Turns in Conversation

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				
Taking turns in conversation	With direct support may take turns in a conversation.	With guided support takes turns in a conversation.	With minimal support takes turns in a conversation.	Takes turns as a thoughtful listener and speaker in a conversation.
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: Several children are playing in the house centre and two girls decide to pack a lunch and travel to another part of the classroom for a picnic. They spontaneously move into make-believe roles, becoming parents taking their babies on this outing, and begin to talk about what should be taken along. They decide to bring a cell phone in case of emergencies, plastic food items, blankets, a tablecloth, a diaper bag, and stuffed toys for the babies. They settle on a spot for the picnic, imagining they are beside a lake. While on the picnic, they invite a classmate who passes by to join them. The teacher observes their interactions as they unfold, but does not intervene in the planning.



Direct Support

Mei Ling and Chloe provide their guest, Katlyn, with direct support to join their picnic conversation by *explaining* what they are doing. Chloe takes the lead by *directing* the conversation with Katlyn. She asks her, "Are you enjoying yourself?" "Have you been on many picnics this year?" Although it is a rainy fall day outside, Chloe *makes explicit* the details of their imaginary picnic by saying how wonderful the sun feels on her skin. Then Mei Ling *explains* that they are all going to take the babies for a walk. Katlyn thanks the girls for letting her be a part of their picnic. Taking turns in the conversation with Katlyn, they *direct* her to sit on the blanket and to enjoy some food with them. They *instruct* her to look after the babies. Later they ask her to join them for a swim in their lake.



Guided Support

The teacher comes over to the group and provides guided support by *structuring* a conversation with them using questions. He asks, "How far did you travel to get to your picnic?" "Will you be staying here very long?" "Have you had any problems with wild animals?" Mei Ling responds, "No, but we have our cell phone if that happens." The teacher *guides* Katlyn into the conversation by commenting that he noticed she was taking good care of the babies, and asking Katlyn if she thought the babies needed to take a nap.



Minimal Support

Katlyn initiates a new direction in the conversation by saying, "I see an ant!" Her companions provide minimal support by *prompting* her to describe where she saw it. Katlyn points to the ground and says the ant is moving toward the picnic blanket.



Without Support

Together, the three girls decide to get out some imaginary ant spray and spray it on the ant. Without support, they have a three-way discussion about how ant spray is harmful to the environment, and decide that next time they will step on the ant instead.



Sociodramatic play is especially useful for developing "advanced syntactic utterances and sentence expansions that are linked to reading success."

Children's Play: The Roots of Reading, p. xv.