

Kindergarten Oral Language Development: Understanding Vocabulary

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 vocabulary	With direct support may understand a limited vocabulary.	With guided support understands a basic vocabulary.	With minimal support understands a wide vocabulary.	Understands an extensive vocabulary.
	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: Two boys, Georgie and Aramis, are using a magnifying glass at the Discovery Science table to study a group of objects found in the nearby woods—a fern, some fir branches and cones, a rock and a mushroom. Aramis is an ESL student with limited English vocabulary. Georgie is quite articulate and has a strong interest in science. They are having a conversation about the items.



Direct Support

Aramis appears distracted when viewing the objects at the Discovery Table. Georgie gives him direct support by rubbing the back of the fern to dislodge the fine powder created by the spores, and *shows* him that this leaves a powder residue on his arm. While doing this, Georgie says “powder” and “this is powder.” Then Georgie rubs the fern on Aramis’ arm and says “powder” again. Then Georgie holds Aramis’ hand and guides it over the bottom side of the fern, repeating the word “powder.” Then Georgie says, “powder” and nods his head.

Photo to be added



Guided Support

Aramis picks up a rock from the Discovery Table and shows it to Georgie. Aramis says, “A rock.” Georgie responds with guided support by saying, “Aramis, that is a rock with spots”. He *cues* Aramis by pointing at the spots while he says the word “spots.” Aramis and Georgie exchange smiles as Aramis repeats, “a rock with spots.”



Minimal Support

Later in the year, Georgie invites Aramis back to the Discovery Table where there is now a beach display. Since the beginning of the year, Aramis’ vocabulary and facility with English had expanded and he is now able to express himself in short phrases. He picks up a smooth river rock and says to Georgie, “This has no spots and no powder.” He smiles at Georgie, who asks, “Do you know what kind of rock this is?” Aramis says, “It is a rock from the beach.” Giving minimal support, Georgie *prompts* Aramis to add more describing words to tell about the rock. He encourages Aramis to *elaborate* by asking, “What colour is the rock?” “How does it feel?” “How heavy is it?”



Without Support

Toward the end of the school year, Aramis and Georgie collect a bucket of rocks and bring it to school. They have decided to build an Inukshuk that looks like one in a story the teacher has read recently. They sort through the rocks and put them in piles by their size. Then they draw a plan for their structure showing how the rocks will be placed. While they are working on their structure, there is much back-and-forth conversation about the rocks’ features, how to balance the rocks, and how many rocks to use for each part. Aramis and Georgie *extend* one another’s thinking as they *explore* the possibilities. When the structure is complete, they make a presentation to the class. Without support, Aramis is able to explain many features of his Inukshuk, including how it was built, what it is made of and how many rocks have been used. He even suggests some other ways to build with rocks.



Children who speak a language or dialect that is different from the mainstream are as diverse as children who speak English as their first and only language. Because language and culture are inextricably related, these children may be unfamiliar with the dominant culture’s ways of representing or displaying knowledge. Their discourse may not match the school’s way with words.

