



**MGH INSTITUTE
OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS**
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**Facilitating First Words and Word Combinations
Practical Strategies that Work!**

Lesley Maxwell, M.S., CCC-SLP
Associate Professor
Director of Clinical Education
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders
MGH Institute of Health Professions, Boston, MA
lmaxwell@mghihp.edu

**Pre-cursors to Expressive use of First Words
What do kids need to develop prior to using first words
expressively?**

- Cognitive development
- Development of communicative intentions
- Socio-emotional development
- Language comprehension development
- Use of gestures to communicate
- Development of pre-speech vocalizations

Late Talker Areas to Evaluate

1. Hearing
2. Play
3. Shared Affect
4. Joint Attention

Late Talkers Areas to Evaluate

4. Language Comprehension
5. Communicative Expression
 - **Means of Communication**
 - Behaviors (such as tantrums)
 - Gestures
 - Vocalizations
 - Words
 - **Functions of Communication**

Late Talker Areas to Evaluate

6. Speech Sound Production
7. Parent and Sibling Interactions with Child
8. Stimulability to Language Scaffolding
 - Strategies Such As:
 - Modeling
 - Expansions
 - Forced Choices

**Why do SLPs evaluate play in
children 0-4?**

- Play development is a measure of **cognitive** development in young children
- Play development is closely correlated with the development of language and communication.

Does cognitive development precede language development?

- Simple pre-requisite relationships are not typically found in normal development

Local Homologies

- Specific relationships that occur at certain periods of development

Joint Attention

- Involves infants coordinating their interactions with both objects and people
- Interactions with objects where both participants constantly monitor each other's attention to both the object and to themselves
- Involve routines in which children come to understand adult's communicative intentions

Central to Language Development: Skills of Intention Reading

- Sharing attention to objects and actions-
 - Joint Attention
- Understanding the communicative intentions of others

Tomasello (2003)

Role Reversal Imitation

- The ability to use an object or action towards an adult the same way that the adult used it towards the child.
- An ability central to therapy where we expect children to imitate our words and actions and then use them as their own.
- Video Example

Joint Attentional Frames: Helping Children Understand Language

- **Schemas**
- **Routines**
 - What are some common daily routines a young child might participate in...
- **Video Example**

Let's explore this important area to evaluate in Late Talkers:

Language Comprehension

Ages and Stages Questionnaires: A Parent-Completed Child-Monitoring System – Third Edition (ASQ-3; Bricker & Squires, 2009).	-Developmental questionnaires -Screen gross and fine motor control, communication, personal-social, and problem solving
Bayley Scales of Infant Development – Third Edition (Bayley-III; Bayley, 2005).	-Assesses sensorimotor skills, cognitive, psychomotor, social, visual, and auditory -Some items can be scored based on observations, omissions, refusals, and caregiver reports
The Brigance Infant and Toddler Screen (Brigance & Glascoe, 2002).	-Parent report and direct elicitation versions -Assess fine motor, gross motor, receptive language, expressive language, self-help, and social-emotional
Communication and Symbolic Behavior Scales – Developmental Profile (CSBS DP; Wetherby & Prizant, 2002).	-Screening tool for identifying infants at risk for developmental delay or disability -Assesses symbolic play, nonverbal communication, and expressive and receptive language

MacArthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventories – Second Edition (Fenson et al., 2007)	-Parent report instrument -Expressive and receptive vocabulary sizes -Early grammatical production
Preschool Language Scale – Fifth Edition (PLS-5; Zimmerman, Steiner, & Pond, 2011)	-Measures broad range of receptive and expressive language skills
Rossetti Infant-Toddler Language Scale (Rossetti, 2006)	-Assess preverbal and verbal communication skills and interaction in children -Criterion recycling bin
Sequenced Inventory of Communication Development – Revised (SICD-R; Hendrick, Prather, & Tobin, 1984)	-Evaluates communication abilities of children with and without intellectual disability

The Expressive Big Two

- **Means of Communication: How?**
 - Behaviors
 - Gestures
 - Vocalizations
 - Words
- **Functions of Communication: Why?**
 - What is the purpose of the communication?
 - What meaning is being conveyed?

3 Types of Gestures Used to Communicate

- Contact Gestures
- Conventional Gestures
- Distal Pointing

Contact Gestures

- The child touches desired objects

Conventional Gestures

- The child uses a natural gesture that anyone can understand to communicate.
- Examples:
 - Reaches up to be picked up
 - Shakes head to reject
 - Open palm reach to request and object

Distal Point

- The child points with their index finger at something out of reach
- The presence of distal pointing is highly correlated with better outcomes for expressive language use when children with developmental delays are observed over time.
- Example:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfW13-o_q_Q

Gestures: What the research says

- The rate and use of pre-linguistic gestures has been found to significantly correlate with later language attainments, in normally developing children and children with developmental disabilities.
- Brady, Marquis, Fleming, McLean (2004)

- “Children’s representational gestures emerge within familiar games and routines and later become less context bound. Old forms are used in ‘new’ ways which may serve as a rehearsal for the same phenomenon used later with words. Representational gestures often appear around 12 months of age.”

- Crais, Douglas, Campbell (2004)

Expressive Communication Means: WORDS!

After gestures and at the same time as gestures are first words. What forms do they take in typical development?

- Nouns: 50%
 - General: milk, dog, car
 - Specific: mama, Spot
- Action Words: 19%
 - Go, up, eat
- Modifiers: 10%
 - Mine, dirty, big
- Personal Social: 10%
 - Please, Hi, No

First Words

- Early words develop to fulfill the social functions originally conveyed by gestures

Early Communicative Functions

1. Behavior regulation of others
2. Social interaction
3. Gaining and directing joint attention

Common Communicative Functions of First Words & Gestures

- Requesting actions (go)
- Requesting repeat actions (again/more)
- Requesting objects (car)
- Rejection/Protesting (No)
- Cessation of Action (done)
- Greeting (hi/bye)
- Calling attention to objects or actions or self
- Questioning
- Repeating/Practicing

In addition to what means kids use to communicate we need to look at:

- **Communication Frequency**

- Children who are not talking but who communicate frequently have a better prognosis for expressive language

Communication Frequency

- Is the child an active or a passive communicator?
- Does the child communicate frequently or infrequently in spontaneous contexts?
- How frequently does the child respond to the communicative acts of others?

Frequency of communication acts using any means of communication

- 18 months: children produce an average of 2 *communicative acts/minute* including words, gestures, or vocalizations to express intention
- 24 months: children produce an average of 5 *communicative acts/minute* the majority of which are words or word combinations to express intention

Let's explore these areas to evaluate

- Speech Sound Production
- Parent and Sibling Interactions with Child
- Stimulability to Language Scaffolding

6. Vocalizations in the Pre-Linguistic Period

- “More vocalizations and, in particular, more consonant-vowel syllables during the pre-linguistic period are linked to better performance on later speech and language measures.”
- McCathren, Yoder, and Warren (1999)

Phonological Development in Late Talkers

- Typically, children with small expressive vocabularies also show small phonetic inventories of consonants and a restricted number of syllable shapes

Phonological Development in Late Talkers

- The development of consonants is closely related to the development of words. The amount of vocalization that contains only vowels is negatively related to language growth.
- Assessing phonological development is a very useful prognostic indicator and as an aide in choosing first words for therapy.

What is a Phonetic Inventory?

- A list of all the sounds that the child can say regardless of whether the child says a particular word correctly
 - For example: A child says ma-ma-ma while babbling.
 - That child can say ‘m’ + ‘a’ and reduplicated cv + cv + cv with those sounds
 - A good first word target would be “mama”

Video Review

The Responsive Caregiver

- Provides predictable language input
- Matches language input to child’s attentional focus
- Directs child’s attention to objects and actions
- Follows child’s lead (reduces use of directives)
- Structures routines, environments, to ensure child success
- Reacts to gestures by providing vocabulary input

Caregiver Observation Tools

		LOW									HIGH								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Interactive Goal	1. Become play partners	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
Interactive Problem	2. Lack of playfulness	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
Adult Problem	3. Directive, controlling style	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
Child Goal	4. Stay with others in play	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
	5. Imitate others	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
Adult Strategies	6. Play in childlike ways	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
	7. Communicate in ways close to the child’s	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
	8. Communicate about immediate experience	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
	9. Comment more than question or command	<input type="checkbox"/>																	

Pre ■ and Post ■ rating of parent and child performance.

<http://lshss.pubs.asha.org/article.aspx?articleid=1779280>

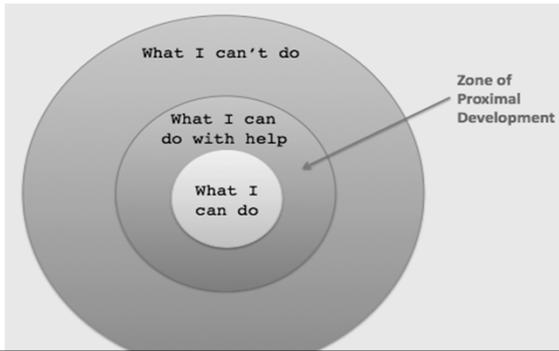
	LOW									HIGH								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10. Becoming turn-taking partners	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
11. Lack of active togetherness	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
12. Low interactive participation	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
13. Show a turn-taking play style	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
14. Use actions in functional & meaningful ways	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
15. Maintain and balance turn-taking	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
16. Match the child's behavior	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
17. Wait, signal, and expect	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
18. Imitate and animate	<input type="checkbox"/>																	

Pre and Post rating of parent and child performance.

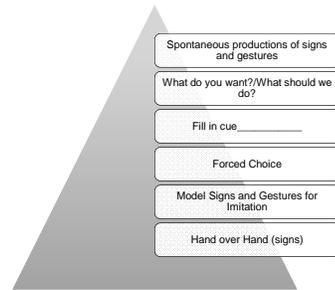
	LOW									HIGH								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Interactive Goal 28. Become language partners	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
Child Problem 29. Low verbal and pragmatic skills	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
Child Goals 30. Use varied vocabulary	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
Adult Strategies 31. Follow grammatical rules	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
32. Verbally match child experiences and communications	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
33. Develop verbal topics	<input type="checkbox"/>																	

Pre and Post rating of parent and child performance.

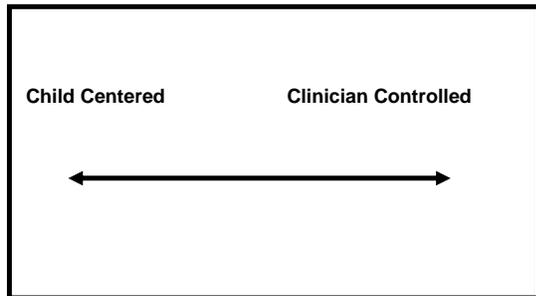
Stimulability to Language Scaffolding Strategies



Expressive Single Word/Sign Use Scaffold Ladder



Theoretical Approaches to Intervention



Hybrid Approaches to Language Intervention

- **Hybrid:** "An offspring of two plants or animals of different races, breeds, varieties, species, or genera."

(Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary)

Two Big Goals

- Expand the Number of Pragmatic Functions of Existing Forms (Words and Gestures) (use)
- Functions of First Words:
 - Requests for objects
 - Requests for actions
 - Requests for repeat actions
 - Cessation of actions
 - Negation
 - Calling for Attention
 - Greetings
 - Possession
 - Names for significant others (nomination)
- Expand the Number of Words for Existing Pragmatic Functions (form)

Pre-Linguistic Children

- Teach gestures developmentally as a first means of communication.
- Teach joint attention at the same time that you teach gestures
- Focus on expanding communicative functions once you have established particular types of gestures (contact, conventional, distal point)

Can you teach Joint Attention?

- **Joint Attention**
 - Identify JA as an objective and reinforce it systematically
 - Use activities that naturally draw attention to your face such as bubbles
 - Move a preferred object up to next to your eyes
 - Move it behind your head before presenting the object
 - Put preferred objects in clear plastic bags and look through them as the child reaches or points towards them to request

Intervention Strategies

- **Accept words and/or conventional gestures initially.** Signs can be used but conventional gestures are naturally occurring, easily understood by all communicative partners, and less symbolic.

- Choose **functional/practical/useful words** that help the child get things done and communicate their wants and needs.
- Most kids want to request actions and objects, “more, go, ball” and say ‘No’ so start with those functions.

- Choose **more nouns** than verbs to start but use them for requesting.
- Choose words that are made with **sounds the child can already produce.**
- Choose words with sounds that are **easy to produce** (“done” instead of “finished”)

- **Shape approximations of words** ('mmm'/'muh'/'ma'/'mama'): accept mmm for 'mama' then move to a CV and finally to only accepting 'mama'. (Remember to use names for the pragmatic function of gaining attention and calling rather than naming).

- **Increase imitation of gestures, sounds, and words** across tasks. Try imitating the child's actions when you get stuck. Go back to turn taking with playful imitation rather than using words for requests etc. Take the pressure off. Encourage imitation of verbalization, body movements, play, facial expressions before phonemes (see below)

Increasing the Number of Sounds a Child Can Say

- **Teach the child to imitate** the actions of others
 - Start with physical motor imitation
 - Hopping, dancing, running clapping, playing musical instruments
 - Make sure you imitate the actions of the child! Take-turns imitating each other. Let the child lead, then you be the leader.

- **Teach the child to imitate sounds.**

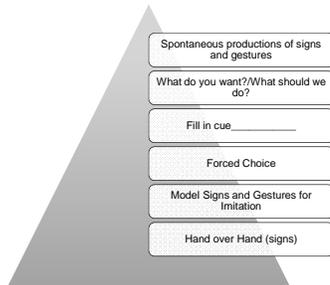
- Make sure you imitate the sounds the child makes! **Follow the child's lead** imitate their vocalizations to increase vocalization frequency and control
- Use tubes, microphones, even buckets that **cause the child's voice to be amplified during vocal play**
- Start with imitation of **easy to 'see' phonemes** that are also easy to produce such as bilabials and nasals with schwa in CV (ba, ma, pa, na)

- Attach a fun **cause-effect action** that happens as a consequence of a vocalization for example: gain attention of others. Have a parent whip their head around in response to a vocalization or spin to face the child to show that vocalizing is the best way to get the attention of listeners.

Sound Teaching Progression

- Vowels alone: ooo, aaaa, eeee, etc.
- CV: same vowel ma, ba, da, ga,
- CVCV: same vowel: mama, dada, baba
- CV: different vowels: ma, me, mo, moo
- CVCV: vowel changes same consonant: babo, dadee, babe
- CVC: bob, dad, CVC: two different consonants: big, book

Expressive Single Word/Sign Use Scaffold Ladder



Using Build ups and Breakdowns with Toddlers

1. Start with a full sentence at child's developmental comprehension level
2. Break down to the target word that you want the child to imitate
3. Build back up to a full sentence

Parallel Talk



Helpful Hints

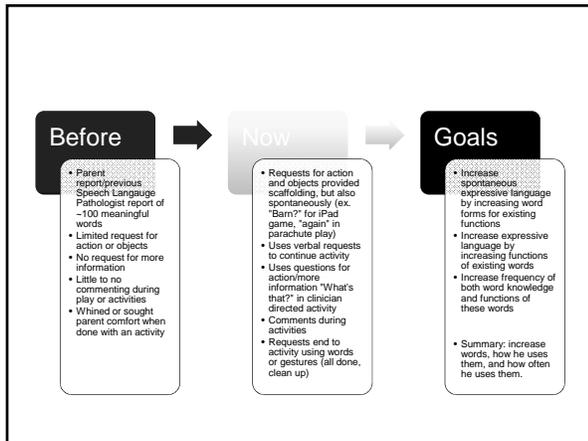
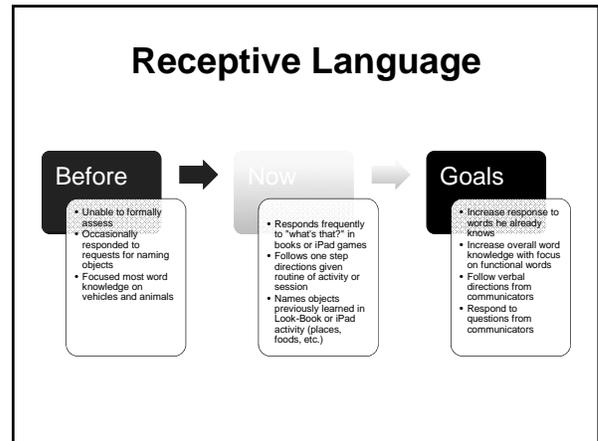
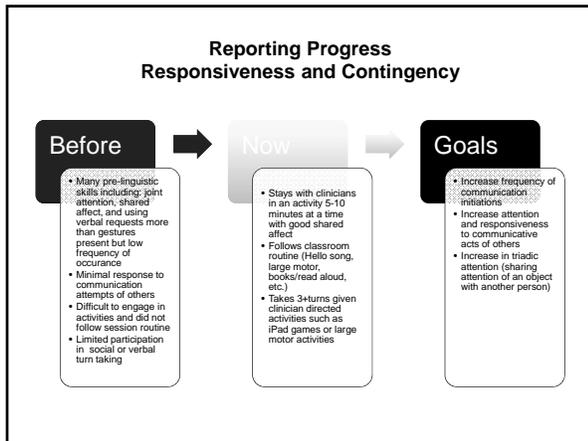
1. Put your target words at the end of your sentence
2. Repeat the target word playfully
3. Model using the word for a functional outcome: Let's try Request for Action

Expansions (a build up strategy)

- Expansions add meaning (semantic) or syntactic complexity to the things children say.
- Children learn more complex language quickly when adults expand the things that children say.

Forced Choice Examples

- Do you want **water** or **juice**?
- **More** or **All done**?
- Does this sound say "pah" or 'buh'?



<p>Parent Report: N/A</p> <p>Clinician Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responsiveness: 2 (almost never) • assessment: 1.03 (never—almost never) 		<p>Parent Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responsiveness: 3 (sometimes) • assessment: 3.1 (sometimes) <p>Clinician Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responsiveness: 3.6 (sometimes—often) • assessment: 3.9 (sometimes—often)
See attached and analysis below		
<p>Types of Play Observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • filling and dumping • simple non-symbolic play • functional use of objects • representational play (7—only 1x, piloted by clinician) 		<p>Types of Play Observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • non-specific object use (e.g. banging and crashing legs) • filling and dumping (e.g. putting objects in the bag boat) • simple non-symbolic play (e.g. pushing buttons on the iPad to make things happen) • functional use of objects • representational play (e.g. building a person) • simple schematic construction (e.g. used lego construction as hat and gave to each person to hat other clinician modeling) • symbolic play (e.g. after modeling, used a lego block square as a window/door) • constructive play (e.g. building railroad with the clinician)
<p>Total Expressive Vocabulary Reported: 17 words</p> <p>Total Number of Verbs: 17 verbs</p>		<p>Total Expressive Vocabulary Reported: 44 words (increase of 27 words)</p> <p>Total Number of Verbs: 44 verbs (increase of 27 verbs)</p>
<p>November 12, 2016 (Sample Time = 5min)</p> <p>Playing with cars/train</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • total number of words = 26 • does include imitated words; does not include immediate repetitions of the same word • total number of unique utterances = 13 • does include imitated words • total number of 2 word utterances = 2 • ratio of characteristic utterances = .461 		<p>March 31st, 2016 (Sample Time = 5min)</p> <p>Playing with lego</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • total number of words = 50 • does include imitated words; does not include immediate repetitions of the same word or nearly unrecognizable utterances • total number of unique words = 21 • does include imitated words • total number of 2 word utterances = 11 • ratio of characteristic utterances = .531

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Play Development Checklist

Definitions and Stages

Put a Y (Yes) or N (No) in the column next to each play stage the child has achieved. Circle the highest stage of play. Write examples of play behaviors observed in the observation notes. Include notes on parental report of play not observed but reported to be present in other contexts.

TYPES OF PLAY		OPERATIONAL DEFINITION	AGE COMMENTS
<i>Y/N</i>	<p><i>NON-SPECIFIC OBJECT USE</i></p> <p><u>Observation Notes:</u></p>	<p>Manipulating (banging, shaking, etc.) mouthing, visually exploring, non-specific stacking or dumping.</p>	<p>By 9 months mouthing begins to decrease</p> <p>By 18 months non-specific objective use, with the exception of visual exploration, has diminished.</p>
<i>Y/N</i>	<p><i>FILLING/DUMPING</i></p> <p><u>Observation Notes:</u></p>	<p>Non-specific placement of objects into container, with or without subsequent emptying.</p>	<p>Emerges by 10-12 months</p>

<p>Y/N</p>	<p><i>SIMPLE MEANS/END MONTHS PLAY</i></p> <p><u>Observation Notes:</u></p>	<p>Appropriate use of toys such as Busy Boxes or See and Say toys in which pushing a button or pulling a string makes something else happen.</p>	<p>Emerges by 12 months</p>
<p>Y/N</p>	<p><i>FUNCTIONAL USE OF OBJECTS</i></p> <p><u>Observation Notes:</u></p>	<p>Appropriate use of common objects; e.g., a spoon, cup, brush, phone</p>	<p>Emerges by 15 months</p>
<p>Y/N</p>	<p><i>REPRESENTATIONAL PLAY</i></p> <p><u>Observation Notes:</u></p>	<p>Appropriate use of common objects to engage in play directed toward a doll or stuffed animal. Child pretends to care for dolls by giving them food, putting them to bed etc. Play is other-directed.</p>	<p>Emerges by 18 months</p>

<p>Y/N</p>	<p><i>REPRESENTATIONAL PLAY WITH DOLL AS AN AGENT</i></p> <p><u>Observation Notes:</u></p>	<p>The doll, manipulated by the child, uses the object in an appropriate way; e.g., the child has the doll look in a mirror, talk on a phone, kiss another doll, blow out candles.</p>	<p>Emerges by 21 months</p>
<p>Y/N</p>	<p><i>SINGLE-SCHEME COMBINATIONS</i></p> <p><u>Observation Notes:</u></p>	<p>One pretend action is successively directed toward different recipients; e.g., the child feeds the doll, feeds the mother, feeds a stuffed animal.</p>	<p>Emerges by 21 months</p>
<p>Y/N</p>	<p><i>MULTI-SCHEME COMBINATION</i></p> <p><u>Observation Notes:</u></p>	<p>Two or more pretend actions are performed successively; e.g., the child feeds the doll and then brushes its hair.</p>	<p>Emerges by 21 months</p>

Y/N	<p><i>ORDERED MULTI-SCHEME COMBINATIONS</i></p> <p><u>Observation Notes:</u></p>	<p>Two or more pretend actions which show a logical relationship are performed successively; e.g., child pours imaginary tea from a teapot into a cup and pretends to drink; child dials and then holds phone to his ear.</p>	<p>Emerges by 24 months</p>
Y/N	<p><i>SYMBOLIC PLAY</i></p> <p><u>Observation Notes:</u></p>	<p>An object is symbolically substituted for an absent one; e.g., child uses a block for a baby's bottle, a piece of paper for a cookie.</p>	

GENERAL PRINCIPLES: Play is more sophisticated as it becomes less egocentric.

Children gradually distance themselves from their own experiences and begin to act out play themes they have not directly experienced.

Play becomes more elaborate as children combine and sequence a variety of play ideas and play becomes more symbolic as cognition develops.

Created By;
Dorry Brown
Kristine Strand, Ph.D.
Children's Hospital, Boston, MA

Adapted by Lesley Maxwell, M.S.,CCC-SLP, MGH Institute of Health Professions

Pre-linguistic Skills Observation Checklist

Shared Attention	Expressive Means of Communication	Functions of Communication
<input type="checkbox"/> attends to actions of others Observations:	<input type="checkbox"/> uses contact gestures Observations:	<input type="checkbox"/> requests actions and objects Observations:
<input type="checkbox"/> exhibits shared affect Observations:	<input type="checkbox"/> uses conventional gestures Observations:	<input type="checkbox"/> rejects actions and objects & cessation of actions Observations:
<input type="checkbox"/> demonstrates turn taking Observations:	<input type="checkbox"/> exhibits distal pointing Observations:	<input type="checkbox"/> comments on actions and objects Observations:
<input type="checkbox"/> shows triadic joint attention Observations:	<input type="checkbox"/> uses words or signs (symbolic communication) Observations:	<input type="checkbox"/> uses questions to seek information Observations:

Pre-linguistic Skills Observation Checklist

<p>Other functions: Calling/Getting Attention with Voice Possession</p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> Greets/uses polite social forms</p> <p>Observations</p>
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Speech, Language and Literacy Center
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders
Charlestown Navy Yard, Boston, MA 02129

Format and Sections for a First Words Assessment Report

Name:
Date of Birth:
Chronological Age:

Dates of Testing:
Examiners:

Address:
Telephone Number:
Parent's Names:

Referral Source:
Reason for Referral:

I. BACKGROUND HISTORY:

II. BEHAVIOR DURING ASSESSMENT:

III. EVALUATION MEASURES:

IV. RESULTS OF ASSESSMENT:

Hearing

Play

Joint Attention

Shared Affect

Language Comprehension



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Expressive Communication:

Communicative Means

- **Gestural Means of Communication**
 - **Contact Gestures**
 - **Conventional Gestures**
 - **Distal Point**
 - **Signs (symbolic)**
- **Verbal Means of Communication**
 - **Vocalizations**
 - **Words**

Communicative Functions

- Requests for objects
- Requests for actions
- Requests for repeat actions
- Cessation of actions
- Negation
- Calling for Attention
- Greetings
- Possession
- Names for significant others (nomination)

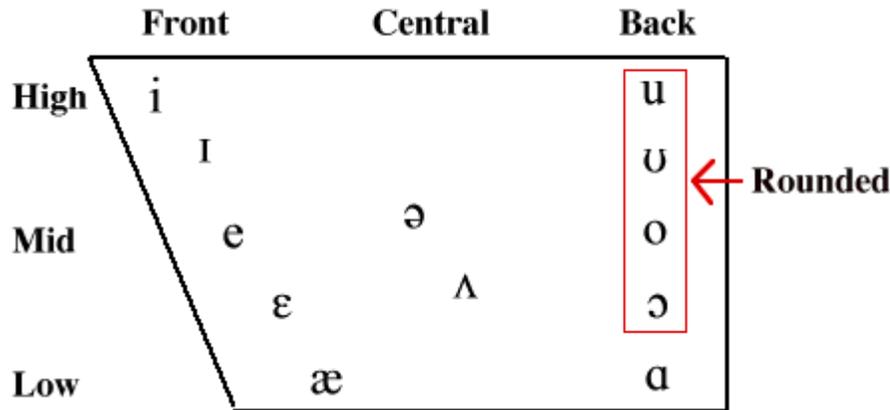


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Speech Sounds/Phonology/Phonetic Inventory

Overall									
Nasals	/m/	/n/	ng						
Stops	/p/	/b/	/t/	/d/	/k/	/g/			
Affricates	/tʃ/	/dʒ/							
Fricatives	/f/	/v/	/θ/	/ð/	/ʃ/	/ʒ/	/s/	/z/	/h/
Glides	/w/	/r/	/l/	/j/					

Key: ✓ = Produced
 -- = Not produced



Frequency of Communicative Acts

Reciprocity with Communicative Partners

Voice

Fluency

V. CONCLUSIONS

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS:

VI. INTERVENTION PLAN: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Talk With Me and Read With Me Fun Activities for Teaching First Words

Lesley Maxwell, M.S.,CCC-SLP (1997)

lmaxwell@mghihp.edu

Turn Taking and Vocal Imitation

Objectives

Increase joint attention to objects and actions

Increase imitation of gestures

Increase gestural and vocal turn-taking

Increase imitation of speech sounds

Suggested Book

Boynton, S. *Moo, Baa, La La La*. Little Simon/Simon & Schuster

Reading Dialogue:

Moo, Baa, La La La is a fun book for toddlers! It has big pictures, short sentences, and animal sounds that are easy to imitate. Read the book to your child 2 or 3 times just as it is written. Stop and name the pictures and say the sounds again if your child points to them. Use your voice to make the animals sound funny. After your child has heard the story a few times, try pausing after the word, “says” in each sentence and see if your child can say the animal’s sound all by himself. “The cow says _____”. “The pigs say _____ all day and night”. Now try asking your child a question as you look at each page. “What does the cow say?” “What is that?”

Extension Activities

Scribble Talk

Materials: butcher paper, crayons or markers

1. Tape a large piece of butcher paper on a table or cover a wall.
2. Give a crayon or marker to the child and take a matching one yourself.
3. Do not look at the child. Begin to draw on the paper next to the child. Make large circles on the paper while saying “oooo”. Use your whole arm. Match your movements to your vocalizations. Try raising your vocal pitch and spiraling your circles up the page. Lower your pitch as you spiral down the page. Make some big slow circles and some small fast circles altering your voice rate.

4. Now change the sound and the action. Say a sound or combination of sounds that you have heard the child say before. For example: Say “da!” while making a mark on the paper. “da-da-da!”

4. If the child begins to follow your lead by making similar coloring actions or imitating the sounds, add some pauses. Make eye contact. If the child moves the marker or vocalizes during a pause follow the child’s lead by imitating the child’s actions. Do exactly what the child does, say exactly what the child says. Start a coloring conversation.

5. If the child does not imitate you, try another action with a different crayon or marker. Make long straight lines while saying “aaaaaaah”. Make upside down ‘v’s while saying “ma”. If the child makes any marks on the paper, imitate them. Produce a sound that matches the marks. Take turns.

6. Use your body. Use your voice. Take turns. Have fun.

Sound Can

Materials: a cookie tin or metal popcorn can with a tight lid, small objects such as a car, a fire engine, a cow, a telephone, a baby bottle

1. Collect small toys and objects that are easy to represent with a vowel, VC, CV, or CVC vocalization and a gesture. Try to match sounds and gestures introduced in books.

2. Seat children in a circle. Say, “Billy. What do you want? Do you want a car?” Model, “mmmmm” for an engine sound. Close your fists and move your arms as if you are holding on to a steering wheel and driving.

3. Open the can and present Billy with the car. Close the can and repeat with all of the objects.

4. After all of the objects have been labeled, use just the question without the model. “Samantha. What do you want?” Pause and wait for a gesture or a vocalization.

5. Shape by accepting only vocalizations if children use primarily gestures.

Using First Words Calling and Greeting

Objectives

Use names to gain attention of others

Use names to call a special person who is out of sight

Increase use of “hi”, “bye”, and proper names to greet and signal leave taking

Suggested Books

Home-made photo books

Reading Dialogue

Use your photo books for simple pointing and naming. Try the simple verbal routine for each page. “Where’s mommy? There’s mommy. Hi mommy! Where’s daddy? There’s daddy. Hi daddy!”

Extension Activity

Come When I Call You!

Materials: Family members and other special people.

1. Seat the child in a chair facing a door and send the child’s caregiver/teacher/friend outside of the door.
2. Model by calling the person’s name loudly. “Mommy!”
3. As soon as you call her name have mommy rush inside and act delighted. Laugh. Smile. Cheer. Kiss. Repeat a number of times.
4. Add a pause. Wait until the child vocalizes to have mommy rush in. Accept any vocalization initially. Shape closer approximations of the word.
5. Try it with two people leaving the room as the child watches. Point to the photo of the person that you are calling at the same time that you say the name. Fade use of photos as prompts.

First Words ***Requesting Objects and Actions***

Objectives

Increase comprehension of cause-effect

Increase use of single words to request objects and actions

Suggested Book

Hill, Eric. *Where's Spot?* G.P. Putnam's Sons

Reading Dialogue

Books that have little doors that open to reveal surprise pictures are great for teaching children to request actions using books. Try this dialogue while reading *Where's Spot?*

“Where's Spot? Is he under the table?”

Pause

“Open!” (make it sound like a command by saying the word slightly louder and raising your voice at the end)

“No. Spot is not under the table” (sound sad)

Repeat for each picture. I often substitute the words ‘the dog or doggie’ instead of ‘Spot’.

Try just saying “Open!”

Extension Activity

Go!

Materials: wind up toys (try a flipping animal)

1. Wind up the toy. Pause.
2. Slap the table with your palm and say, “Go!” as you let the toy go.
3. Repeat 2 or 3 times.
4. Wind up the toy. Pause. Wait for the child to request the action with a gesture or vocalization. Fade response to gesture over time.

Hint: Flipping wind-up toys are great because they often flip one last time after they have stopped if you slap the table next to them.

Try: The same sequence with bubbles and balloons. Use the word “more” to request repeat actions. Expand to using names of objects and other actions.

Echo Tubes

Materials: long cardboard mailing tube, small plastic farm animals or little matchbox vehicles

This is a great activity for teaching requests for objects and actions. Kids like the feedback of echo tubes.

1. Uncover both ends of the tube.
2. Hold the tube upright with one end in your left palm. Drop in the pig, sheep, and cow so they are stacked inside. Don't let the child see you do that.
3. Seat the child in front of you. Look into the open end of the tube. Say, "What's in there? Cow! I see you cow. Moo...come out! Come out cow! Moo."
4. Let the child look into the tube. Let the child try to reach in if he attempts to.
5. Speak directly into the end of the tube. Say, "Moo! Moooooo cow. Moo!" Tilt the tube so the cow slides out into your right hand. Act delighted and surprised.
6. Repeat steps 3-5 with pig and sheep.
7. Put animals back in the child watching.
8. Repeat steps 3-5 but do not release animal until child approximates the animal sound to request the action of the animal sliding down the tube.

Understanding and Asking Questions

Objectives

Increase comprehension of questions

Increase formulation of questions

Suggested Books

Hill, E. *Where's Spot?* G.P. Putnam and Sons

Eastman, P.D. *Are You My Mother?* Random House

Reading Dialogue

These books have lots of opportunities for children to hear questions. Some questions are more difficult for children to understand, ask, and answer. Your speech language pathologist can help you to decide which questions your child is ready for. To help your child with questions, you can read a book using simple questions repeated for each page instead of the text. For example, *Where's Spot?*

“Where is Spot?”

“Where is he?”

“Is he under the table?”

“No!”

“Where is Spot?”

“Is he in the clock?”

“No!”

Extension Activity

Where is the egg?

Materials: large plastic Easter eggs, stickers, or small edibles

1. Put a sticker or small edible in each egg. Hide them. I usually hide them all *under* or all *in* things to keep the preposition constant.
2. Bring the child into the room. Say, “Where is the egg? Where is it? Is it under the table? No it is not under the table. Where is the egg? Is it under the hat? Yes! The egg was under the hat!”. Search together. Use exaggerated searching, open palms, and extra stress on the word, “Where?”
3. Find all the eggs. Each time you find one say, “I found the egg. It was under. Under the hat” etc.
4. Repeat 2-3 times.
5. Come in the room and pause. Let the child initiate the search. They almost always imitate once they have internalized your self talk.

Lesley, Maxwell, M.S., CCC-SLP (1997)

Treatment Plan for Expressive Communication
Sample Goals and Objectives
Expressive Communication and Conversational Turn Taking

Lesley Maxwell, M.S.,CCC-SLP

Long Term Goal #1: Increase reciprocity and attention to the meaningful acts of others

Short Term Goal #1: Increase attention to the faces of communicative partners

Objective one: XX will make eye contact with the clinicians and other adults to initiate a communicative act or a turn in a play activity in 80% of obligatory contexts.

Objective two: XX will make eye contact with the clinicians and other adults to initiate a request for actions or objects in 80% of obligatory contexts.

Objective three: XX will make eye contact with the clinicians and other adults to identify whether they are attending to his meaningful actions or communicative acts 80% of obligatory contexts.

Short Term Goal #2: Increase triadic joint attention

Objective one: XX will give an object to clinician/adult during structured play activities and look toward their face and back to the object in 80% of obligatory contexts.

Objective two: XX will make eye contact with his communicative partner and gesture or vocalize towards a desired object during structured play activities in 80% of obligatory contexts with an object prompt.

Short Term Goal #3: Increase imitation and turn-taking

Objective one: XX will participate in turn taking play by repeating his actions or vocalizations after they are imitated by the clinician or parent in 80% of obligatory contexts.

Objective two: XX will increase the variation in his actions or vocalizations (change them) in response to the clinician/caretaker's imitations in 80% of the contexts.

Objective three: XX will imitate the actions or vocalizations initiated by the clinicians/parent in 80% of the contexts.

Long Term Goal #2: Increase expressive communication

Short Term Goal #1: Increase use of gestures to communicate

Objective one: XX will use a contact gesture (touch) to request desired objects in 80% of obligatory contexts in a structured play activity or daily routine.

Objective two: XX will use conventional gestures to request a desired object (ball, car, cookie etc.) in 80% of obligatory contexts in a structured play activity or daily routine.

Objective three: XX will use conventional gestures to request a desired action (i.e.: open, more, go, up etc.) in 80% of obligatory contexts in a structured play activity or daily routine.

Objective five: XX will use conventional gestures to reject an object or action (no) in 80% of obligatory contexts in a structured play activity or daily routine.

Objective six: XX will use a conventional gesture or the ASL sign to request cessation of action (done) in 80% of obligatory contexts in a structured play activity or daily routine.

Objective seven: XX will use distal pointing when requesting desired objects in 80% of obligatory contexts in a structured play activity or daily routine.

Objective eight: XX will use distal pointing to draw the attention of listeners in 80% of obligatory contexts in a structured play activity or daily routine.

Objective nine (this can be skipped if child moves on to words after conventional gestures and common signs can be used as conventional gestures if easy to understand by unfamiliar listeners): XX will use basic signs for existing communicative functions in 80% of obligatory contexts.

Short Term Goal #2: Increase use of vocalizations to communicate

Objective one: XX will use speech-like vocalizations and eye contact to gain listener attention when requesting an object or action in 80% of obligatory contexts.

Objective two: XX will use word approximations when requesting an object or action in 80% of obligatory contexts.

Short Term Goal #3: XX will increase his spontaneous expressive language by increasing the number of novel words used for existing communicative and pragmatic functions.

Objective one: XX will use an action word or preposition such as *go, open, close, up, down, in, out, off, on, under, etc.*, to request an action or object during a structured task spontaneously 5x/word in three different communicative contexts.

Objective two: XX will indicate cessation or rejection of an activity or action by using the words *stop, done, all done*, spontaneously 5x/in three different communicative contexts.

Objective three: XX will use negation *no* spontaneously to reject objects and actions 5x/ in three different communicative contexts.

Objective four: XX will use names of caretakers to call for their attention 5x/spontaneously in three different communicative contexts.

Objective five: XX will use the word *me* or *mine* to indicate possession of an object or to take a turn in play 5x spontaneously in three different communicative contexts.