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Promoting Language Development from Birth to 5 in One Language or Two: A Short Guide to Program Planning

Prerequisite: Understanding Child Language Development

All program staff and parents must wholeheartedly believe that children benefit from growing up with more than one language. Research shows that bilingual children have cognitive advantages over monolingual children in tasks which require selective attention, meta-linguistic awareness, and mental flexibility. Bilingual children benefit socially from recognition of their home experiences in out-of-home care, and bilingual children develop greater understanding and tolerance for others. Supporting bilingual child development opens doors in the community for family involvement and new horizons for their children.

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In this handout, we present
  ➢ guidelines for how to staff your center for children's dual language development:

I. Child-Staffing for Language Development
 A. Taking a Language Inventory at Enrollment
 B. Child-Staff Grouping for Dual Language Support
 C. Supplementing Language Resources with Volunteers

  ➢ staff training activities, based on research, to support optimal child language development

II. Staff Development for Language
 A. Building Language Awareness
 B. Activities to Help Increase Children's Conversation and Personal Stories
 C. Integrating Language Volunteers throughout the Childcare Day

Conversation is the garden of language development;
language development is the ground for literacy.

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I. Staffing for Language Development

A. Taking a Language Inventory
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The foundation of any Head Start program's plan for supporting first and second language development is a detailed inventory of all the languages which are used in the community and in the homes of the children enrolled in the center or program.

➢   Which languages do the children bring to school with them?

➢   Which languages do they need to learn?

➢   Which languages do the primary caregivers speak natively (as a "first" language, L1)? As a 2nd language (L2)?

➢   What language resources do other Center staff offer?

➢   What language resources can the community provide?

Which languages do the children bring with them?

The Head Start team members who are responsible for enrolling families and their children in the program also have the responsibility to collect language information about each child. Enrollment procedures are often lengthy and make use of many forms, so staff should be prepared to record language information in an organized way. Language information includes:

- exactly where the family is from originally (what region, village or town)
- where the family has lived during the child's life
- what language(s) each family member (parents, grandparents, siblings, etc.) speaks to the child at home
- what language adults or older children use with each other at home

Important information is easily overlooked during the interview if only one parent speaks or if the parents are using a second language for the interview. For instance, in a family from Guatemala, the father may speak Spanish during the interview while the mother is quiet. One might assume that Spanish is the language of the home when it is actually an indigenous Mayan language, such as Q'anjobal.

Family support staff may be unable to identify the home language of a family if it is unfamiliar, but careful notes about where the family is from and how the name of the language sounded can be enough for a language consultant to make the identification. A language consultant may be someone in your community who is from the same region as your family, or a linguist. Linguists can be found at many community colleges and universities, and they can be contacted by phone or e-mail. The Center for Applied Linguistics (www.cal.org) is a national resource center that has language experts and support materials for language groups throughout the United States.

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Example Head Start Center Language Inventory

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- In column 1, all the home language environments are listed
- In column 2, the children are grouped according to their home language and by age.
- In the next column, each caregiver/teacher is added to the language inventory according to the language(s) he or she speaks. In the example given below, a bilingual staff member is listed for both (all) of his or her languages, indicating which language is the native language (L1) and which language was learned later (L2).
- Additional staff members are added to the language inventory (in column 4) if they can be scheduled to **spend time with children on a regular basis**.
- Family or community language volunteers can be added in the last column.

EXAMPLE Head Start Center Language Inventory

1 **Home Language(s) Environment by Child**	2 **Child** by **Age** *(youngest to oldest)* **& Home Language**	3 **Primary Caregivers by Language(s)**	4 **Other Staff by Language(s)**	5 **Volunteers by Language**
English only	Lucy, 3 mo. James, 1.5 Robert, 2.8 Linda, 3.0 Gordon, 4.5	Ms. Jones Ms. Harris Mr. Cade L_2 Ms. Martine L_2		
Spanish only	Lisa, 6 mo. Luis, 7 mo. Oscar, 1.8 Gloria, 2.4 Jesus, 3.0.	Ms. Rodriguez Mr. Cade L_1		
English & Spanish	Pete, 8 mo. Sarah, 3.2			
Haitian Creole/Kreyol only	Laurence, 8 mo. Edwidge, 2.2 Tati, 3.0 Georges, 4.3	Ms. Martine L_1	Ms. Obrey, L_1 (cook)	
Vietnamese only	Sho, 2.2 Giap, 4.0			Mrs. Nguyen (parent)
American Sign Language & English text	Helen (deaf) 2.3 Martin (hearing) 4.5			Mr. Clark (deaf adult, community businessman)

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B. The Staffing Plan: Grouping for Dual Language Support
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Staffing children for group care is guided by many things: design of the facility, child age and stage of development, child and staff temperaments, and budget. However, given the importance of language development for social, emotional, and cognitive growth, language considerations are a very high staffing priority. Based on the Example Language Inventory provided above, one possible staffing pattern for an Example Head Start Center is presented.

The Example Center has three same-sized rooms with sinks and toilets, two of which have changing tables. There are five infants enrolled in the center, two toddlers, four two-year olds, four three-year olds, and four four-year olds. Each room is designed for two groups (two caregivers).

The plan shows at a glance which children are receiving adequate exposure to native language speakers in their home language or their school language

The first columns show which children are assigned to which caregiver in each room, showing language resources and children's ages for each group.

The row for each child shows the level of exposure to the home language, the (public) school language, and other languages.

The level of language exposure is coded in the staffing plan using the following codes:

1	**Primary Caregiver using native language**
2a	**Primary Caregiver using second language**
2b	**Secondary Caregiver using first or second language**
3	**Limited exposure to other languages available in the center**

The last column, "Training and Scheduling Notes" indicates the languages that teachers will need to learn "survival phrases" in. For children, this column contains a plan for supplementing the home language when it is not provided by either the primary or secondary caregiver.

1's and 2's— providing acceptable home and school language support
The children who are receiving adequate exposure to a language through native language speakers are those with a 1 under home and/or school language. A '2a' in those columns represents a Caregiver speaking relatively fluently in a second language or '2b,' a Secondary Caregiver speaking a native or second language. Either of these situations has the potential to provide acceptable language support.

3's—children requiring extra support for home language
Finding a '3' under either home language or school language means this child requires extra support for language and overall development. Support plans are found under Scheduling Notes. Language support plans may be based on other staff within the program, parents, or volunteers, who can participate in the child's daily routine **a minimum of three times per week**.
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	Room One	Home Language	School Language	2nd or 3rd Language	Training and Scheduling Notes:
Room One, Ratio = 1:3 Maximum Group = 6	**Ms. Rodriguez SP**				Support for learning English, some Kreyol
	Lucy, 3 mo., ENG	**2b**	**2b**	**3**	
	Lisa, 6 mo SP	**1**	**2b**	**3**	
	Luis, 7 mo. SP	**1**	**2b**	**3**	
	Ms. Jones ENG				Support for learning Spanish, some Kreyol
	Pete, 8 mo. SP/E	**2a***	**1**	**3**	
	Laurence, 8 mo. K	**3**	**1**	**2a***	Schedule time w/ Ms. M. 3 x week Add Kreyol print, audio, video
	James, 1.5 ENG	**1**	**1**	**2a, 3**	

(When there are 2 possibilities, the most advantageous is noted.)

This staffing plan has grouped the infant children together with caregivers who will be speaking their native languages—they are good language models. The oldest child in this grouping, James, is the only toddler at this time, This awkward age grouping was necessary to maintain quality staffing ratios in all the rooms, but since he is in a small group of only three with a caregiver who speaks his home language, he should receive a great deal of individual attention and make excellent developmental progress in this setting.

All of the children in Room One will have primary or secondary language experience with English from Ms. Jones. All the children except Laurence are receiving support in their home language from either their primary or secondary caregiver.

Because Laurence does not have home language support from either a primary or secondary caregiver (coded as a '3'), Ms. Jones must schedule 8-month-old Laurence to spend time with Ms. Martine in Room 2 at least three times a week to provide Kreyol language experiences. If Ms. Jones takes James and Laurence with her to Ms. Martine's group for scheduled activities, Laurence will get home language experience, James will experience challenging same-age activities, and 8-month old Pete can join Ms. Rodriguez's group for experience in his other home language (Spanish). Ms. Rodriguez will maintain a very high-quality staffing ratio during these times with four children in her care with a maximum group size of 4.

The Training Notes indicate that both teachers will need support to learn basic vocabulary and phrases in Spanish/English as well as Kreyol to meet the needs of all the children and families they serve. Room One should be equipped with board books, labels, posters, and music in English, Spanish, and Kreyol.

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	Room Two	Home Lang.	School Lang.	2nd or 3rd Lang.	Training and Scheduling Notes:
Room Two, Max Ratio = 1:5 Max Group = 10	**Mr. Cade SP/E**				Support for learning some Vietnamese and some ASL
	*Oscar, 1.8 SP	1	2b	3	
	Sho, 2.2 V	3	2b	3	Schedule Ms. Nguyen 3 x week Add Vietnamese print, audio, video
	Helen 2.3 ASL	3	Eng. print	1	Schedule Mr. Clark 3 x week; recruit more volunteers; provide ASL video materials
	Gloria, 2.4 SP	1	2a	3	
	Jesus, 3.0. SP	1	2a	3	
	Ms. Martine K/E				Support for learning some ASL and Vietnamese
	Edwidge, 2.2 K	1	2b	3	
	Robert, 2.8 ENG	2b	2b	1, 3	
	Tati, 3.0 K	1	2b	3	
	Linda, 3.0 ENG	2a	2a	1, 3	

*Oscar is not yet two, but he will be within the year, and his primary caregiver speaks his home language.

In Room Two, Mr. Cade has five children whose ages range from 20 to 36 months and who use three different home languages: Spanish, Vietnamese, and ASL. He will need support for learning some ASL and Vietnamese. Since he is bilingual in Spanish and English, he will schedule specific group activities in English to provide opportunities for all the children in his group to gain English experience, and he will schedule individual and group activities in Spanish to provide home language support for Jesus, Gloria, and Oscar. He will need to schedule volunteers to provide home language experiences for Sho and Helen at least three times a week, and he will need to add print and media materials in ASL and Vietnamese to the English, Spanish and Kreyol collection in Room Two.

Like Mr. Cade, Ms. Martine will schedule activities in English and in Kreyol to meet the home and school language needs of her group of four (ages 2.2-3.0). She can invite the cook, Ms. Obrey to join the group for special Kreyol activities to add more adult language to the experience. When infant Laurence and toddler James join her group, she will take all six children to Room Three. Linda, Jesus, and Sarah will join Ms. Harris' pre-k activities in English while Ms. Martine will talk and read stories in Kreyol with infant Laurence, two-year olds Edwidge and Tati, and preschooler Georges.

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	Room Three	Home Lang.	School Lang.	2nd or 3rd Lang.	Training and Scheduling Notes:
Room Three, Max Ratio = 1:7	**Ms. Harris ENG**				Support for learning some ASL, Spanish, Vietnamese, & Kreyol
	Sarah, 3.2 SP/E	**1, 3**	**1**	**3**	
	Giap, 4.0 V	**3**	**1**	**3**	Schedule w/ Mrs. Nguyen 3 x week Add Vietnamese print, audio, video to classroom
	Georges, 4.3 K	**3**	**1**	**3**	Schedule w/ Ms. Martine 3 x week Add Kreyol print, audio, video to classroom
	Martin 4.5 ASL/E	**1, 3**	**1**	**3**	Schedule w/ Mr. Clark 3 x week Add ASL "print" and video to classroom
	Gordon, 4.5 ENG	**1**	**1**	**3**	

In Room Three, Ms. Harris has five preschoolers who are 15 months apart in age. She only speaks English, so all children in her group will experience the language of school spoken by a native speaker. This will be good preparation for transition to kindergarten.. However, there are four other languages represented in Ms. Harris' group: Vietnamese (Giap), ASL (Martin), Spanish (Sarah), and Kreyol (Georges). Ms. Harris must coordinate the scheduling of Mrs. Nguyen's and Mr. Clark's visits with Mr. Cade so that each volunteer can interact with the children who require their language support: Giap and Sho for Vietnamese and Helen and Martin for ASL.

Sarah is Ms. Harris' only Spanish speaking child. She can be scheduled to be with Mr. Cade for Spanish activities during visits from Mr. Clark or Mrs. Nguyen, and Gordon may benefit from any of these new language experiences as well. The materials in Ms. Harris' room (books, posters, audio video) must reflect pre-k curriculum in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Kreyol, and ASL. When these pre-k home language materials are shared with non-English speaking families, they provide a powerful link for gaining understanding of school curriculum and school expectations.

When a program is caring for one or more deaf children, staff must be aware of the children's language experiences in the home setting. Most deaf children are born to hearing parents who have little or no communication with their deaf child, causing frustration and missed learning opportunities. If the child has a cochlear implant (or is scheduled to be implanted), using a visual language (sign language and print) is still recommended so the child can experience normal language development while the new hearing processes develop in the brain. ASL and English is the natural dual language program choice. For many deaf children, English is their third language. Early experiences in ASL give them the best support for future language challenges.

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A Brief Guide to Program Planning for Promoting Language Development from Birth to 5 in one Language or Two

Part II. Staff Development for Language

This section of the guide describes staff training activities that are based on research and are designed to support optimal child language development through caregivers' interactions with children. The development plan is presented in three sections:

      A. Building Language Awareness
      B. Activities to Help Increase Children's Conversation and Personal Stories
      C. Integrating Language Volunteers throughout the Childcare Day

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A. Building Language Awareness

1. The first objective for staff training and development is for caregivers to develop awareness of their language behavior. Reflecting on the following questions on a regular basis will build each caregiver's ability to monitor and adjust their use of language.

    ➢ "How much do I talk with my co-teacher during the day?"
    In quality care settings, almost all classroom talk involves the children.

    ➢ "How much do I talk during activities?"
    Teachers must strike a fine balance between talking so much that children don't have the chance to speak and talking so little that children don't even bother to use language during the activity.

    ➢ "How long can I keep a conversation going with a single child?"
    In group care, we are always attuned to all the members of our group. Without training and coaching, we are likely to cut short many critical opportunities for one-on-one conversations with individual children.

    Providing opportunities for caregivers to informally record and review their interactions with children is a powerful and potentially transformative form of feedback. It must be implemented in positive ways, encouraging openness and self-awareness.

2. The second objective in building language awareness is for caregivers to identify their use of multiple languages during the daily and weekly schedule. The key questions for reflection are:

    ➢ Which language am I using?
    ➢ Which language(s) do the children need?

    This objective may be met with a combination of self-assessment through record-review as well as feedback notes from an outside observer. The language use information gathered during this time can be used to guide activity planning for specific language experiences for children in groups as well as for individual children.

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3. The third objective in building language awareness is for caregivers to identify the kinds of talk they are using during different activities. This identification is critical if caregivers are to provide the strongest possible support for children's language development.

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Kinds of TALK

Talk is shaped to some extent by the activity itself. The activity provides the here-and-now vocabulary and events of the moment (e.g. storybook reading, a small group activity with magnets, a game of tag outdoors). But conversations with children pattern in different ways, distributing the responsibilities for knowledge, memory and speaking skills to different conversational roles. And even when one kind of conversation is going, it is likely to shift to another kind of conversation as participants get new ideas, remember past events, make jokes, have complaints, etc. Research tells
us that our ability to follow children's different conversational threads has the greatest impact on child language development.

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We will describe five different kinds of talk that both adults and children use in child care settings: 1) expository discourse, 2) quiz, 3) management, 4) task accompaniment, and 5) personal narrative.

1) *Kinds of Talk: Talking Like a Book (Expository Discourse)*

The language of teaching and learning is traditionally thought of as the language a *teacher* uses when giving a lesson and checking students for comprehension. In traditional classrooms, teachers talk. students listen, and the teacher asks questions to test their understanding. All children do not learn effectively in this traditional learning environment, and children certainly do not develop strong language skills in a traditional, teacher-dominated environment.

> **Research in child language development over the last fifty years has made it very clear that children's language develops when children are interacting— speaking and listening—in language events which are of great interest to them and which include the complexities of adult language.**

Teachers and caregivers naturally expect to do a lot of talking which 'sounds like a book': using the new vocabulary of an activity, describing things and how they work, and supporting children's use of this same language. Books, of course, give us our ideas of what it means to 'talk like a book,' and research shows that **frequent and regular book sharing, side-by-side with a child**, is one of the most significant positive influences on children's language development.

 Talking with a child one-on-one while carrying out *an activity* in the classroom has much of the same language support for children as sharing a book because adults and children are focused on the same thing (art project, science discovery, etc.). Doing small group activities, adults use their greater knowledge of the activity-subject to model talking like a book and to give children practice in using that academic language.

Examples of adults supporting children's academic language are easy to find in early childhood training videos. Several video clips of adults and children using academic language are available on the High Scope Curriculum web site, http://www.highscope.org/Content.asp?ContentId=381.

2) *Kinds of Talk: Quizzing*

Asking young children quiz questions is commonplace in classrooms as well as in many homes. However, adult quizzing does not give children significant practice with producing complex language,

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since answers usually require recall of only a single word or phrase. Quizzing can be a source of frustration for young children when they are not able to participate successfully and when quiz questions interrupt their thinking. Research shows that children produce very limited language in childcare settings with caregivers or teachers who ask a high percentage of quiz questions.

Children sometimes invent quizzing games for themselves. In this case, they are creating the questions, which is practicing complex language. So it is best to leave quiz questions to the children.

3) *Kinds of Talk: Managing Tasks and Behavior*

All quality care programs emphasize **positive guidance** to manage children's behavior in group settings and share the philosophy that discipline is instruction, not punishment. Research shows that children who hear frequent negative sanctions (e.g. No, You can't do that, Shame on you, Go away,) through their early years find themselves with smaller vocabularies than their classmates who grew up with positive, instructive guidance. This vocabulary advantage becomes a reading advantage through the school years.

Managing talk isn't always about correcting behavior—it may be requests for materials, directions for where to sit or what to do, and instructions to clean up or put away materials. Children participate in this management talk as well as teachers as they claim things, direct others, and resolve conflicts

In a study of talk in preschool small group tasks (Burns, 1992), the teachers all practiced a positive philosophy of talking with children. Their directives to children used complex language as they clarified and explained what was to be done. Analysis showed that teachers' managerial talk was as complex as 'talking like a book' (expository discourse). The only difference was that children paid attention to teachers' managerial conversations more easily whereas they often resisted participation in expository discourse. Complex language is more inviting for children when it is tied to the business of getting things accomplished.

In the two examples below, notice the complexity of the teacher's language: specific instructions, reference to time sequence, and reasoning. Also notice that children are paying attention and showing comprehension of this complex language.

ADULT   Now put the crayons in the box for me, Nikki. All right?
CHILD   Well, I'm gonna do one. (make another picture)
ADULT   Well, you can maybe do one when we go downstairs.
        Because we're going to have to go downstairs now. All right?
CHILD   Why?
ADULT   Because it's time to go down.

ADULT   Jake, can you not start anything else just now, love, because we're going back down to the
        nursery? Can you put it back? We're just finishing Vida's puzzle. That's it.
CHILD   I'll wait outside.
ADULT   Just stand there. That's a good boy. Don't go away without me.

4) *Kinds of Talk: Task Accompaniment*

Think of children you have observed who are deeply engrossed in what they are doing. When children are doing a task with their hands, their tongue may stick out as a natural part of trying hard at something. When working with props and manipulable pieces, a child may talk out loud about what he or she is doing without expecting anyone else to speak. It is a kind of conversation with one's self and

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the doing of the task. Examples of children's talking from transcripts of children ages 3-5 doing activities with table toys are:

> I'm holding it on this.
> I wish I could get my elephant out.
> I'm trying to put this on backwards!
> I want all the animals standing up.
> I have yellow.

This kind of talk helps children accomplish physical tasks; **language is used as a tool for thinking**. Talking within the task is very simple talk from the language point of view; the complexity comes from thinking and solving problems. During a study of preschool children doing small group tasks, nearly 40% of all talk during these activities was task accompaniment.

5) *Kinds of Talk: Personal Stories or Narratives*

When children talk about things that have happened in their lives, or are going to happen, they are telling personal stories. Research shows that children use their most complex language skills when they are telling their stories; but we also know that young children cannot tell these stories without adults providing **lots of short, supporting comments**.

When children are talking during activities during the day, personal stories may naturally arise. **These spontaneous stories allow the adult to follow the child's language very closely with short, supportive turns**. In the following example, the children are doing puzzles in a small group. Some of the puzzle pieces are farm animals and some are zoo animals. Most children are talking as they play freely with the puzzle pieces, accompanying the puzzle task by mentioning things like "horses in a line" or "cars over here." One child, Nikki, initiates a personal story at this time about her father seeing a horse

CHILD   My daddy is /

ADULT   (interrupted by Ruth, Teacher, and Graham all talking about horses for several more turns)
CHILD   My daddy saw a horse.

ADULT   *Did he? Nikki? Where did he see a horse?*

CHILD   I don't know. He just saw it. (Other children are talking to the teacher.)

CHILD   Well, it—he was at sea … and he was…it was lovely and he was doing that (sticking neck out forward) and he was doing all sorts of things.

ADULT   *Oh was he? He was stretching his head over the ledge or something was he?*

CHILD   No. Over the fence. And my daddy gave him some gum, and he went "no" (shaking head) like that.

ADULT   *That's nice. Did he? (laughing)*

CHILD   He tried to eat the sandwich.

ADULT   *Oh dear!*

CHILD   My daddy's sandwich.

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ADULT   *Oh, that wouldn't have been any good, would it? Heh?*

CHILD   Daddy would've lost his lunch.

In this story, Nikki is able to tell a lengthy and complex story which her father had told her about his seeing a horse. The teacher listens carefully and responds with short, repetitions of the information with tag questions ("Oh did he?" "Oh was he?" "Would it?") and specific questions or comments which repeat elements of the child's story ("Where did he see a horse?" and "He was stretching his head over the ledge or something."

All of these conversational strategies encourage the child to tell more about the story. Adult support for children's conversational stories are made possible when adults have:

- genuine interest, careful listening
- time and patience
- knowledge of the child's life at home

   Telling personal stories in conversations with adults is critical for children to practice using complex language and to find a place for their personal experiences outside the home. No video clips of children telling personal stories in childcare settings were found in our internet search. All the clips of children's stories were recorded in family settings by parents. This url http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_s2-onN7d9s takes you to a You Tube clip of a four-year-old telling the videographer a story about what happened when her sister cut her finger. This child is talkative, so the adult role is small; however, without the adult's patience and interest, the child's lengthy story would not have unfolded. Our goal is to make children's personal stories a more typical part of the daily routines in child care.

The kinds of talk presented above are summarized here:

kind of talk	Child's participation	Adult's participation
Expository discourse	• not always personally important • requires complex language: new vocabulary and ideas • supported by here and now	• requires knowledge of subject • models complex language • supports children's repetitions and contributions
Quizzing (children can take adult role)	• interprets adult question • recalls information item • produces information item	• create the question • assess the answer • judge the answer
Management (children can take adult role)	• personally relevant • supported by here and now	• models complex language: sequencing, cause and effect, spatial locations, past, conditional, and future references
Task accompaniment	• spontaneous, initiated by child • supported by here and now • 'launching pad' for complex language	• support comments with repetition & expansion
Personal narratives	• personally important • requires very complex language based on memory	• requires **short**, **helpful** conversational turns

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B. Training Activities for Staff Development

1) Building language awareness

In out-of-center training, a prepared small group activity could be carried out by adults in a role play of a classroom activity and recorded. The recording can then be used to model for the group how to describe patterns of talking without criticism, and to identify how the "teacher's" ways of talking (and listening) helped (or didn't help) the other group members to talk.

We previously recommended record and review sessions for staff to become aware of how much they talk with children and how much children are talking with them; what language(s) they and the children are using; and what kinds of talking they are doing throughout the day. These activities must be continued over time as language awareness grows with experience.

As caregivers approach higher levels of language awareness, they may be able to prepare a presentation of a recorded activity from their classroom. Recording with teacher reflections on their use of language with children may be collected on a regular basis as part of a professional portfolio.

2) *Supporting Personal Story-Telling*

Training staff to build their conversational skills with children's personal stories can be done effectively with small group practice in which each adult participant has the opportunity to "draw out" a personal story from a child or a role-playing adult. This activity can be particularly effective when participants practice being "drawn out" to speak in an unfamiliar language.   Another activity for training staff to pay attention to children's personal stories is to look at video clips of caregivers talking with children and identifying successes and missed opportunities for supporting a child's personal story.
    Training activities should also revisit the role of props in the classroom which motivate children to tell stories: puppets, telephones, dolls and toy animals, the housekeeping play area in general, dress up clothes, and writing center materials.

3) *Supporting Talking like a book*

Again, the best way to learn academic discourse is to participate in it. Training sessions can provide this experience for teachers by having staff participate in small group activities with one person prepared to play the role of the lead teacher. Adults will be learning new vocabulary and new knowledge in many of these training activities, and the experience of supported learning can motivate supportive teaching. Playing out these same activities in different languages is also a natural opportunity to develop teachers' academic language skills.

We'd like to point out that training staff to support language development will be an ongoing training priority for effective programs. Talking to children in a nurturing, supportive and patient way does not come naturally to every caregiver in spite of good intentions. Many Head Start teachers and caregivers did not grow up with the nurturing kind of talk we are asking them to give to children, and they may feel uncomfortable at first with new ways of talking.
    Also, many teachers may not know the academic language for classroom activities. It is important to create training experiences which support learning at the adult level which are as positive and enjoyable as the activities with children should be.

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C. Integrating language volunteers in the daily/weekly schedule

Supporting children's home language development and the community/school language is likely to require language volunteers who will come to the center to spend time talking, reading, and playing with children in their home language. Recruiting language volunteers is an ongoing process for a multilingual program, and programs must develop strategies for language specific community outreach.

One strategy is to contact places of business which are known to be owned or operated by speakers of a target language group, or churches which serve the target language community. Take time to cultivate relationships with speakers of the target languages for your center, and encourage speakers to volunteer at the center to help keep their language and culture strong for children going to English-speaking schools.

Once a program recruits language volunteers, they will need to be trained and coached to interact effectively with the children they visit. Speech-language professionals typically schedule therapy sessions for children needing language interventions three times a week for a minimum of 30 minutes. We recommend using this guideline for scheduling home language volunteers to talk with children in the program.

Scheduling and training language volunteers must take into account the daily routine of the classrooms and center. Volunteers should be prepared to participate in the kind of activity that is going on during their scheduled visits. The chart below describes how language volunteers might fit into any part of the daily routine.

Morning Greeting	This is an excellent time to schedule a language volunteer. Children could benefit from an additional adult to talk with them at this time, gently checking in with each (often sleepy) child in a personal way as they settle in for the day's routine. During this time, the primary caregiver may be talking with parents as they sign children in, discuss special needs or medications, upcoming meetings, etc., and children are often directed to a play area, such as table toys, where they have minimal supervision until the day's activities formally begin. Early morning is likely to be a missed opportunity for supporting children's language development
Circle Time/ Large Group	When a language volunteer leads a circle time activity, all of the children have exposure to the volunteer's language. If this is one of the minority languages in the community, it is an important opportunity for everyone to see that the language and its speakers have a place of respect within the program. Because circle time activities typically make use of large props, movement, and music, all children will be able to participate in the activity, and over time, they will gain some familiarity with the new language. Staff must support the volunteer in planning effective circle time activities with suggestions, props, and openness to new ideas the volunteer may bring.

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Free Choice in Centers	During free choice time, the volunteer can "shadow" the children he or she is there to support. As children choose their play area, the volunteer can support the child's play through modeling and conversation in the chosen play setting. The volunteer can also facilitate the child's successful interactions with other children playing in the same area and include other children in the conversations and play. If children of different ages are being brought together for language support, free choice time provides a very flexible setting for an adult to engage with children at different levels of development. It is very important that classroom teachers have prepared all the play areas with appropriate multi-lingual labeling, posters, books, audio and video resources, and cultural artifacts.
Small Group	Scheduling a language volunteer for small group activities is a good language support opportunity, provided the volunteer has a well-prepared plan for the activity. Again, staff must support volunteers with options for activity plans, materials, and flexibility for doing things in a new way. The value of having minority language volunteers lead a small group activity is the same as for circle time activities; however, the small group activity provides the best opportunity to introduce academic vocabulary and grammar to the children in their home language. Experiencing academic tasks in the home language (if it is not the same as the school language) is a powerful link for children and their families to participate in the school curriculum.
Outdoor Time	Outdoor times is another flexible environment for interacting with children on different developmental levels and for engaging with spontaneously formed groups of children to support friendship bonds. Language volunteers must be willing to be active in the outdoor space, and again, staff must support an outdoor activity plan for the volunteer (dress up; bubbles; tumbling; sidewalk chalk, etc). It is always possible that children will just want to snuggle up and read a book together with the volunteer, but a range of plans must be on hand.
Lunchtime	This is the premium time of day for a language volunteer to visit. It is the traditional visiting time for parents who join their children for part of the day, and it is a naturally social activity. Adults always sit at the table with the children and eat the same food in quality care programs, so there is a great deal of shared attention with the here and now and it is also a time for personal stories to naturally evolve from the conversation.
Naptime	Scheduling language volunteers for naptime depends on the particular temperament and sleep behavior of the children receiving the language support. For children who have not been sleeping well, talking with a home language visitor in an area away from sleeping children might be an excellent option. Naptime is also an excellent opportunity to make use of tape recorded stories and songs presented in different languages throughout the week.
Good-bye	Similar to morning greeting time, children often spend the late afternoon in unstructured groupings which dwindle as parents pick up their children. Primary caregivers are involved with parent communication, and a language volunteer can provide meaningful opportunities for conversations with children at this time. If language volunteers are needed to help parents and teachers communicate effectively, then their schedule should reflect this purpose and it is not considered to be language support for the children.

Staff training for supporting language development in one language or two can be summed up with a Big Idea in the form of a challenge:

"How long can you keep a conversation going with a single child?"

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