A HOME PROGRAM OF LANGUAGE STIMULATION
FOR THE
CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED PRESCHOOL CHILD
A SENIOR HONORS THESIS
BY
KATHRYN J. MILLER
ADVISOR —— JUDITH THORNBURG

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
MUNCIE, INDIANA
MAY 11, 1979
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PROLOGUE

A child's language develops out of the environment in which he lives. If a younster lives in a home with poor language models, limited speech stimulation, or emotional conflicts, it is unlikely he will acquire a normal communication skills as readily as a child from a verbally rich atmosphere. An older child who has difficulty assembling words into a meaningful utterance, understanding simple directions or lacks speech altogether may have a speech problem referred to as "delayed language". When a two year old says "me go" one thinks he's cute, but when a seven year old uses the same phrase one realizes his language skills are much slower than his peers. This paper will explore the role of cultural deprivation in causing delayed language and offer practical suggestions to assist teachers and parents in remediation language disabilities.

A culturally deprived child does not always live in a slum area with parents of low education and socioeconomic status. Cultural deprivation can occur in any social class. Rising inflation has forced both parents to work in many homes. A preschool child may be left with a babysitter and television or crowded day care center where little time or attention is spent in intimate communicative training. The culturally deprived child is one who lacks the sensory experiences for normal maturation. Ethel Young, a California Nursery School Program Head, states;

"...the omission of experiences, sensory, cognitive, emotional, physical, social, concrete, as well as abstract, verbal and nonverbal is just as detrimental to growth as malnourishment or lack of love."
THE PROCESS OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Language may be defined as a complex system of learned communicative symbols. Symbolic information can be transmitted and received through gestures, movements facial expressions, writing or talking. Speech is the oral/aural mode of expression of language. The process of language acquisition is dependent upon four interrelated factors: the adequacy of the speech mechanism, intellectual ability, maturation and environment.

Since mind and body are functionally dependent, their role in speech acquisition will be considered jointly. Nearly all children are born with the biological equipment to produce and hear speech. However the cognitive knowledge required to transform "precise coordinated movements of 50-60 muscles of the mouth, face, neck and abdomen" into intelligible speech or to auditorially associate certain sounds must be learned. Doctor Morris Val Jones contends that, "Learning takes place as a result of interaction between the organism and its environment." He adds that the process of communication is initiated "soon after birth due to interactions between the infant and his environment." Linguists and psychologists seem to debate whether a child's capacity for language learning is a function of genetic endowment, intelligence, or physical maturation.

Receptive language skills develop prior to expressive language as a "result of a child's ability to hear, i.e. perceive the speech of others." An impairment in hearing or speech mechanisms may delay or permanently damage a child's linguistic development. The growth of an infant's body governs his emergence of speech. Thus, the rate a child acquires language is dependent upon a third major variable, maturation.

Irwin defines maturation as a "gradual unfolding of states of readiness within the child for linguistic performance." Neurophysical maturation plays a large role in establishing speech readiness by determining learning capacities.
and motor coordination. Oral language is normally acquired in a series of predictable stages from birth to 2½ months old.

Dorothy McCarthy depicts the direct relationship between language acquisition and physical maturation. She theorizes that:

"The average child does not use real language until after he is able to breathe easily, has acquired front teeth and has some experience with solid food and assumed correct posture. In addition, as control of the tongue and lips proceed and more teeth erupt (providing a front wall in the oral cavity) the cortex of the brain achieves more control of speech sounds and the first words appear."6

McCarthy's research seems to support universal linguistic development among children of many tongues, since all normal children experience the same stages of neurophysical maturation.

In a study of language acquisition in 18 cultures, Dan Slobin concluded that "every child masters his particular native tongue in a universal order common to all children. In all languages, the child's first word generally is a noun or proper name, identifying some object, animal or person he sees every day."7 Although, parents often feel their child is uniquely special when he first utters their name, Roman Jakobson points out that initial words in all languages resemble "mama" or "papa".8 The use of these words are reinforced by parents. A baby soon learns that saying "mama" he can summon the warmth and comfort of his mother. The process of maturation enables a child to initially produce the "m" phoneme in the word "mama". However, parental reinforcement sustains the word.
Hereditry and maturational factors appear to be significant in the emergence of a child's language from birth to six or nine months. Irwin states that "a child's coos and chuckles at 4 months and babbling from 6 to 9 months occur in the absence of any linguistic stimulation. Beyond nine months and throughout life, environment becomes more important in determining the rate and level of language skills attainment."9

Many culturally deprived children are born with normal intellectual and physical qualities, but lack the environmental stimulation to develop linguistic skills. A child's environment must provide enough appropriate speech models to maintain maturational processes. "Experiences after birth could prevent, retard, or facilitate the attainment of a child's full language potential"10, despite normal physical maturation.

A child's speech reflects the communicative models in his environment. Children born into homes which offer little or no adequate speech stimulation might be expected to have difficulty developing in normal language skills. "Both lack of stimulation and overprotection have been known to cause delayed speech and language development."11 The child who is punished or laughed at for speaking soon learns not to talk. Quality and quantity of speech as well as the type of reinforcement given to a child's speech can strongly influence language development.

Two children given equal linguistic experiences would not be guaranteed to develop language at the same time due to individual intellectual, physical and learning abilities and independent processes of neurophysical maturation. "Precise determination of critical experiences essential to language development and time periods during which these experiences must be made available has not yet been accomplished."12 Since man can acquire new language at any age, we may assume language learning is a constant process throughout life. The following section will discuss normal milestones in speech acquisition from birth to five years of age.
NORMAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

All normal human babies progress through a series of universal, predictable stages when developing speech. The following brief outline of a typical child's steps in learning to talk will later serve as a comparison when examining the culturally deprived child's language deficits. This author has assumed that verbal expression is demonstrative of a child's receptive knowledge of linguistic rules. Therefore, this section is primarily concerned with oral speech development, although other related maturational features may be mentioned.

The beginnings of speech have their origin in an infant's initial birth cry. From birth until a child's first month of life, his crying seems to have no fixed pattern of meaning. "this undifferentiated type of crying is the major vocal response elicited by internal or external environmental stimuli", according to Morris. The parent cannot determine whether the child's bauling means he is hungry, cold, etc. The babies wail sounds the same despite the cause of his discomfort.

After an infant's first month, his crying becomes more auditorially discernable. The baby's "crying is still a part of a total bodily response, but it is growing to be more differentiated as a reflection of more specific emotional and feeling states." Differentiated crying is thought to be a result of greater maturation of the nervous system which in turn allows greater laryngeal control to produce more specific types of crying in response to stimulation. The baby's cry is still reflexive or unpurposeful although the cry may differ according to the nature of discomfort. The mother is the sensitive listener who interprets the baby's status and gives meaning to a type of cry.

Behaviorists suggest that differentiated crying is reinforced by the pleasant responses it elicits from parents. If a child produces a specific type of
cry when he is hungry and is comforted with food by his mother, the baby learns a specific type of cry elicits a specific response. Virgil Anderson and Hayes Newby support the learning theory by saying, "Even the young infant soon learns he can get desirable attention from certain kinds of vocalization, and we thus have the genesis of what could be called a crude kind of speech-vocal expression used to effect a measure of control over the environment."\(^{16}\)

Differentiated crying usually occurs during a child's second and third month of life. There is some evidence that young children who do not respond to their environment by crying may be linguistically damaged. Parents who bragged about their silent "good babies" may later discover their child is nonverbal or autistic.\(^{17}\)

Cooing or comfort sounds are also produced by the neonate. These vowel-like sounds usually accompany feeding. Laryngeal comfort sounds seem to represent a transition from the crying stage to the babbling stage or period of random articulatory sound production.\(^{18}\)

Babbling, like cooing, but unlike crying is associated with pleasureful feelings and emotions. This vocal play period usually lasts from three to six months. This is a significant period in speech acquisition. A child begins to develop favorable feelings toward speaking as he listens to his own chatter and imitations of himself from adults.\(^{19}\) In addition, babbling seems to enhance articulatory proficiency by providing practice of tongue control. However, phonemes produced during babbling seem to have little bearing on later sound development.

During the period of vocal experimentation children produce a broad range of sounds characteristic of many languages besides their native language. Sounds foreign to their native language will gradually disappear as parent's reinforce phonemes characteristic of their speech.\(^{20}\) Barbara S. Wood contends that, "...not many babbled sounds will later be found in the child's native language. Sounds with which the child will have later difficulty may have
been babbled frequently during the first year." As a child matures neurophysically, he will gradually learn to auditorially recall and repeat his own nonsense sounds. If a child says "ga, ga, ga..." in a seemingly unending string, he has most likely entered the lalling stage of language development.

In the lalling stage, a circular feedback system between the infant's oral mechanism and his ear is established. The child receives pleasure through hearing a sound or syllable he has produced and to maintain his pleasure he reproduces the utterance heard. This stage of self imitation generally begins to appear "during the second six months of a child's life." Once the child has mastered imitation of his own voice, he soon learns to reproduce the sounds others produce.

During the ninth or tenth month of childhood, a child may mimic parent productions of "bye-bye" and wave without understanding what he has done. In the echolalic stage, a child hears and repeats sounds someone else has produced without meaningful intent. The oral/aural feedback system used in lalling, now begins to respond to sounds heard in the environment. Sounds foreign to the infant's native language, previously babbled will gradually disappear as he learns to articulate his parent's speech.

By chance, the child may begin to utter sounds very close to a recognizable word. Parents notice the child's production and imitate him, presenting the object or person the child has named at the same time. During this period of "identification language" meanings become attached to specific syllables through the mental process of association. After many imitative experiences, the child is conditioned to say "da-da" when Daddy is present. Next, he will progress to the stage of "true speech" when he says "da-da" in the absence of Daddy to evoke his father's appearance.

According to Dr. Hayes Newby and Virgil Anderson, "a child has truly learned to talk when he uses words deliberately and purposefully with the
intention of exerting a measure of control over his environment.26 A child may say "ball" meaning "Where is the ball?, There is the ball, or I want the ball." Yet the child's one word sentence is usually sufficient to communicate his message to nearby adults. A child's first words are the beginnings of his expressive language. The word has become a symbol for an object or person.

In speech development, receptive language precedes expressive language. Eisenson states, "Between 18 and 24 months, most children have productive vocabularies of three to 50 words and much larger comprehension vocabularies." A toddler may be able to bring a doll on request by twelve months of age, but may not be able to verbally name the doll until months later. As the child adopts adult language, he is also learning to imitate inflection, movements, sound durations and intonational patterns. The first words acquired are almost always nouns. Soon the youngster will learn to combine nouns with other parts of speech.

By age two, most children across the world are able to say two-word sentences.28 One already have shown some evidence that language acquisition is controlled by neurophysical maturation. Barbara Wood related structural growth to speech development in a special study on the nervous system. She found that "a major growth spurt of the cerebral cortex occurs about the age of two, when children join words together in a sentence."29

A child who can combine two words independently has developed his own unique speech. He no longer relies on adults to produce intial phrases. The youngster begins to develop syntax as he learns proper word order. According to Braine, a child's early sentences are comprised of two types of words, open and pivot words. Braine explains these two classes of words as follows:

Open class words: the largest group of words, which usually contain content words; a member of this word class can stand alone as a sentence;
when a child learns a new word it is first admitted in this class.

**Pivot class words:** a smaller class of words usually containing function words: a member of this class cannot stand alone as a sentence.

Using Braine's word classifications the child can create three types of sentences: open word only, pivot and open word, and two open words. Examples of respective sentences would be "Daddy", "See Daddy or Daddy see", and "Daddy cup." These crude grammatical forms depict the roots of adult syntactical rules.

From the ages two and a half to three years, a child is thought to acquire more new vocabulary words than any other corresponding time in his life.

The following linguistic schedule by Anderson and Newby demonstrates this dramatic increase, showing vocabulary expansion from 275 to 900 words. The mean length of response (sentence length) increasing from 1.8 to 4.00 words.

Knowledge of grammar and word forms will also increase proportionately, before the child's third birthday. According to Eisenon, the two and a half year old child's speech includes "functional words such as prepositions, articles, and conjunctions."

Most children by the age of three have mastered syntax and produce most phonemes used in a language correctly. Wood concludes that between the ages of three to 3½, a child speaks in well formed sentences, following rather complex grammatical rules and others can generally understand what he is talking about. The preschooler's language acquisition is nearly complete, except for articulation development. Vocabulary increases and more difficult grammatical rules are applied during the ages of four and five. Language development proceeds at a slower pace as the child becomes a mature speaker.

The following linguistic schedule will summarize the communicative development of the typical child. The ages for levels of speech acquisition mentioned must not be considered exact for all children. Maturational rates
of the individual child seem to play a more significant role in predicting language development than chronological ages. Parents should not be alarmed immediately, if a child does not acquire a language ability at a prescribed age.

**Anderson-Newby Schedule of Communicative Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Language Development</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>Uses one to four words, usually nouns (daddy, mama, milk, et cetera). Understands very simple instructions, especially if accompanied by meaningful gestures or intonation, for example, 'give me the ball.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 months</td>
<td>Uses 20 to 25 words, still mostly nouns. Some verbs beginning to appear; may be combined with nouns to form a basic linguistic unit, as 'daddy come', 'milk gone' et cetera. The one word sentence is predominant; 'ball' meaning 'Where is the ball?', 'I want the ball, 'et cetera. Negative protest frequent; 'no' very common word. Good deal of jargon. Mean length of response (MLR) 1.2 words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 months</td>
<td>Squealing and screaming still prominent. Usually uses initial consonants. Can name some common objects or pictures shown him (ball, shoe, watch, cup, et cetera). Can use two prepositions (in, on or under). Vocabulary 275-300 words. MLR is 1.2 words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 months</td>
<td>Uses pronouns I, you, and me correctly. Uses plurals, past tense, comparatives. Knows three or four prepositions. Can distinguish such opposites as big-little, fast-slow, and up-down. Knows colors red, brown, and blue. Knows the chief parts of his body. Language construction is 50 per cent grammatically correct. Vocabulary 900 words. MLR 4.00 words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 months</td>
<td>Can name colors generally; can use four or five prepositions. Knows some numbers and can tell what familiar animals do or say. Names most common objects in pictures can repeat three digits after hearing them. Knows tense of verbs (run, ran, will run) and number (is, are). Knows forms of simple pronouns (him, her, his et cetera); can distinguish when-where and singular verses plural nouns. Vocabulary 1500 words. MLR is 5.4 words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 months</td>
<td>Uses many descriptive words accurately. Knows common opposites (hot-cold, big-little, long-short and can distinguish alike-different, left-right, and can comprehend &quot;few&quot;. Knows when to say 'please' and 'thank you.' Can count to 10 and name two or three coins. Speech is fully intelligible, although likely to display some errors in formation and use of consonants. Vocabulary 2000 words. MLR is 5.7 words.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
* note that the vocabulary rates refer to expressive language only.


Although a child may have nearly developed receptive and expressive language skills by age five, phonemic proficiency usually takes a few years longer. Girls develop sounds sooner than boys and may articulate most sounds by ages four or five, but many children of both sexes cannot auditorially discriminate and produce all English phonemes until ages six, seven or eight. The subsequent tables illustrate average ages for correct articulation of English consonants.
Normative Data for Phoneme Acquisition

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<td>m</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>3-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>y (ng)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>j (y)</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>2-4</td>
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<td>d</td>
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<td>l</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>s (sh)</td>
<td>3-8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>ts (ch)</td>
<td>3-8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s (th voiced)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z (zh)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d (j)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>θ (th unvoiced)</td>
<td>4+</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>4+</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z</td>
<td>4+</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Prather - 75% Sound accuracy in initial and final word positions.

Sanders - 50% Sound accuracy in two out of three word positions.

Templin - 75% Sound accuracy in all word positions. (Developmental data contained in the same article as Prather).
The Effects of Experiential Deprivation on Speech Acquisition

There is no magical formula for determining the exact quantity of experiences necessary for a child to develop normal language. Experientially deprived youths come from various backgrounds. Although parent's socioeconomic status and education have a definite influence in determining their offspring's linguistic environment, a child's sensory deprivation cannot be attributed to these factors alone. "Economically poor families can be rich in culture, love and understanding of children and wealthy homes can be impoverished in factors that nourish children intellectually, emotionally and linguistically."³⁸

Dr. Glydon D. Riley, after working with over 3,500 Head Start children in Los Angeles, published a workable definition of culturally disadvantaged which seems applicable to this report. He wrote, "Culturally disadvantaged refers to children, often from minority groups, who have not grown up with the same set of experiences as the majority of American youths."³⁹ Both under and over verbal stimulation can be causitive factors of language delay according to Riley's definition. If speech is learned, it seems logical to ascertain that the nonverbal atmosphere will produce the nonverbal child. Contrarily, overstimulation may produce the nonverbal child by removing his need for communication. "Chatterbox" parents find it difficult to understand why their Johnny doesn't talk. The overstimulated youngster may have no desire to speak since watchful family members verbalize his needs for him. Some highly educated parents have been known to bombard their children with multiple syllable words and classical literature, art, or music in hopes of providing a rich cultural atmosphere. The youngster may retreat from talking when overstimulated with complex language he can neither relate to or understand. Thus, involved and understanding parents with realistic language expectations for their offspring who supply an average amount of verbal
experiences are most likely to produce normal speakers.

Expressive and receptive language skills are the result (or output) of auditory, visual, and tactile communicative input. If a child's environment fails to provide necessary stimulation for intellectual and language growth according to standards set by the American middle class for acceptable speech, the child's speech may be labeled deviant. However, the difference between "culturally deprived" and "culturally different" should be noted. Black, Spanish, or Puerto Rican children speak in a form which may differ from standard English in pronunciation, morphology, and syntax. Many of these children are not language deficient or delayed: rather, these children have linguistic differences which are appropriate and standard within their own culture. Ginsberg points out intelligence tests are often inappropriate measuring instruments because they reflect subcultural and motivational differences rather than intellectual differences. Certainly comparing counter elements within a culture to middle class standards could cause a minority group to be suppressed economically, socially, and educationally. This is why Riley adds that culturally disadvantaged children are often from minority cultures. But a new breed of experientially deprived children seem to be emerging as a result of modern day trends and pressures which have given parents a complexing set of values and expectations never before known.

A 1977 issue of U. S. News and World Report asked, "What are the nation's middle class families doing to fend off steadily rising living costs that threaten to erode their dreams?", and then answers:

Husbands are working two jobs, some involving danger and long hours. Wives also get whatever work they are able to find to supplement household incomes. Rising inflation can mean that parents spend less time giving intimate communicative training to their preschoolers. In 1965, fifty percent of women
between the ages of 18 and 65 worked. According to Hardy, one million children have no care whatsoever while their mothers work. Another million have inadequate care, a neighbor down the street drops in or perhaps a six year old may watch an infant. Scores of nursery school programs have begun throughout the nation, some good and some bad.

Divorce statistics have doubled during the last decade. The U. S. Bureau of Census reports, from 1970 to 1977 the divorce ratio increased 79% as compared to an increase of 34% from 1960 to 1970. Therefore, more children are living with single parents who must work to support them. Current trends seem to belittle the profession of a housewife and motherhood and glorify the fulfilled working woman who shares equal rights with the husband. Yet the children of this modern age seem to suffer most for they may lack the speech and knowledge to demand their rights for attention, love and understanding. Dr. Benjamin Spock famed child psychologist simply states, "If neither parent is willing to give up time to care for a child, I'd advise them not to have one." This is not to suggest that working parents cannot give their child adequate language training. Although a child's parents, particularly his mother usually have the greatest influence on his language development older siblings, grandparents or other adult speakers can provide normal linguistic training.

Why is early language stimulation so important? Deficits in language appear to have a significant impact on the child's general intelligence. Barbara Bibler writes:

Not only does the child who lacks supportive communication in the early years fail to develop language patterns acceptable to the school, he may also develop deterrents for being able to learn in general, because it
is through being known, felt, and understood as a person that a child's basic curiosity and interest in the world begin to flower and develop.\textsuperscript{45} The preceding chapter revealed the joint role of environment and maturation in language acquisition. Now, the culturally deprived child's environment differs in amount and type of speech stimulation will be examined.

Even in the early prelanguage periods of babbling, parent or caretaker response has a definite influence on infant's vocalizations. In a study of 8 month old infants and their mothers by adoption, the quality and quantity of parent's reactions to a child's babbling was found to correlate with the amount of infant's verbalizations and the quality of his language development. Babies who resided in orphanages and received little personal attention from surrogate mothers did not babble and vocalize as much as family infants.\textsuperscript{45}

There is some research to indicate that the lack of verbal interaction not only discourages linguistic growth but may also cause a child to regress into earlier surpassed language stages. The infant communicates his needs by crying. When a child is neglected or when his aid is slow in coming, he may cry more than other children. Anderson and Newby state that "crying is an expression of a compulsive unpleasant feeling state, but babbling is indicative of a pleasant mood."\textsuperscript{47} Thus, the child who only gains attention through crying and does not engage in verbal play is stunted in language growth. Mothers who are uninformed about their child's stages of speech development may feel it is silly to talk to an infant who cannot understand and talk back.

Language regression can also be connected with emotional problems. In homes where parents continually argue and words are spoken only in
emotional outburst, the young child begins to associate speech with aggression and fears. Penalty fears for speaking. These parents may be so involved in their own disagreements that the child is ignored or caught between a verbal tug-o-war. Eisenson writes "the child who becomes fearful of the consequences of speech may regress to a nonverbal stage of safety and security." Parents still exist who live by the erroneous, outdated doctrines, "A good baby is a quiet baby" and "Children should be seen and not heard." In order for a child's expressive language to progress, speech must be viewed as desirable by parents and the child.

Another home variable that can stunt language growth is excessive, loud, distracting noise. A home full of noise, either human or electronic (radio and television included) may prevent a child from hearing and attending to the parent or other key family members. Many researchers have begun to reveal the harmful psychological effects in children from viewing too much television. Although placing an infant in front of the television may keep him pacified, he is not receiving needed personal communicative training through the tube. A child must learn to auditorially recognize, discriminate and recall specific sounds before he can learn words. In homes where televisions blare and other children constantly chatter, a child's selective auditory attention may be delayed.

A number of home variables that may cause a preschooler to have delayed language have been shown. Now, the focus will be changed to some specific language difficulties found in culturally deprived preschoolers. Consistently disadvantaged children exhibit a number of linguistic liabilities. The underprivileged child typically exhibits characteristics such as a reduced vocabulary, predominant use of nouns and verbs and limited and/or rigid use of adjectives and adverbs, deficient syntactical development, deviations in articulation and deficient auditory discrimination. As a consequence of linguistic weaknesses, perceptual and intellectual development may deviate from
normal middle class children. The speech deficits of many pre-school children are a reflection of inadequate or absent language experiences. Children who fall behind their same age peers during this crucial learning period may find "catching-up" more difficult in beginning school years.

The Experimental Edition of the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities (ITPA) was given to 130, two and a half to six year old children classified as culturally disadvantaged and enrolled in a Nashville intercity language program. Results revealed the mean language age of the group to be 7 months below the mean chronological age. Auditory tasks were an average of six developmental months below visual tasks where attention, discrimination, and memory skills were tested in both auditory and visual areas. The lowest score was obtained on the auditory vocal automatic subtest (Grammatic Closure) which was depressed an average of eight months or more. Scores reflected reduced syntactical ability. "Culturally disadvantaged children appear to develop at non-equivalent rates with reference to their auditory and visual modalities and the capacity of those modalities to process information." These deviations would be considered insignificant in the older elementary child; however, during the preschool years when rapid linguistic gains are achieved, 3 months discrepancies can be significant sign of language and/or intellectual abnormality.

Basil Berstein made an extensive study of differences in language patterns of London's working class and middle class during the 1960's. He found the greatest handicap of the poor to be in the realm of language. Berstein stated that a child's language significantly affects the way he thinks and behaves and that poverty often leads to "irreversible intellectual impoverishment." A child who is unable to verbalize his internal feelings may find more aggressive means of expressing himself. Personality problems and
antisocial behavior (which is so often characteristic of lower socioeconomic and poorly educated groups) may be initiated by the inability of children to internalize and express their emotions through words.

Certainly, research seems to indicate that early language development has far reaching implications in a child's later life. "An individual's language ability is one of the most significant variables in determining his level of social and economic attainment as well as his development of emotional maturity and appropriate social behavior." The responsibility for providing linguistic training for the preschool culturally deprived child extends beyond parents and educators to all those concerned with the emotional social, and intellectual well-being of America's future citizens.
FOOTNOTES

1 Leitch, Susan M. *A Child Learns to Speak* (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1977) p. 32

2 Ibid, p. v


5 Ibid, p. 81


7 Slobin, Dan. "They Learn the Same Way Around the World", *Psychology Today* (May 1972)


9 Irvin and Marge, p.p.80-81

10 Ibid, p. 72


12 Irvin and Marge, p. 109

13 Jones, p. 23


16 Anderson and Newby, p. 62

17 Eisenson, p. 123

18 Anderson and Newby, p. 63

19 Eisenson, p. 123

20 Jones, p. 23
21Wood, Barbara, p. p. 90-91
22Anderson and Newby, p. 64
23Jones, p. 24
24Eisenson, p. 124
25Anderson and Newby, p. 67
26Ibid. p. 68
27Eisenson, p. 125
28Wood, Barbara, p. 27
29Ibid. p. p. 27-28
31Eisenson, p. 127
32Anderson and Newby, p. 84
33Eisenson, p. 127
34Wood, Barbara, p. 27
35Eisenson, p. 129
37Sanders, Erick, "When Are Speech Sounds Learned" JSHD Vol. 37 (1972) p. 62
39Jones, p. 78


47 Anderson and Newby, p. 63

48 Eisenson, p. 185


50 Hardy, p. 86

51 Ibid, p. 93

52 Inglis, p. 95

53 Irwin and Marge, p. 75
OBTAINING PARENT COOPERATION

Parent rapport and active participation with the teacher and child is one of the most significant variables in a home language stimulation program. Without the constructive support of the parent, carry-over of suggested language activities will not occur. Since most preschool children spend nearly all of their time at home, this is where language stimulation and learning must take place. In exploring how to obtain parent cooperation, three important areas will be discussed: 1) good counseling characteristics, 2) dealing with parent resistance, and 3) active involvement of parents on the home language program.

Establishing a warm, open teacher-parent relationship is the foundation of solid language learning with a child. A teacher should possess certain personal qualities that facilitate establishment of a firm, cooperative relationship with parents. First, the teacher should show genuine warmth and concern in the child's language problem. Too often parent's seem to "tune out" teachers who give appropriate child information in a cold aesthetic manner. Not only what the teacher says is important, but also, how she says it. Carl Rogers describes the insensitive counselor as having an "I-it" relationship with the client. In this type of relationship, the client is seen "as a complex object, a machine whose functions may be in disrepair in certain ways." In the warm, accepting relationship, Roger's "I-Thou" relationship, there is a "deep sense of communication and unity between the counselor and client." Genuine concern for a parent and child can be expressed verbally and nonverbally.

The stoic teacher who sits behind a large desk and uses polysyllabic words and professional jargon to describe language remediation is not likely to be successful communicator with most parents. A false air of complete knowledge about children may actually be a reflection of a teacher's deep insecurity toward their competency as a professional. "The most common fear expressed by beginning interviewers is that clients will not accept them in a professional role because of their youth."
Talking down to a parent may cause them to feel resentment, guilt, or insecurity. These qualities when felt in the parent or teacher prevent further growth of a communicative relationship. The parent's age, education and social background should be considered when discussing a child to prevent a language barrier.

According to Rogerian theory, the teacher's role is not merely to impart information, but to act as a "facilitator of learning." Rogers writes:

> When the facilitator is a real person, being what he is, entering into a relationship with the learner without presenting a front or facade, he is much more likely to be effective."

The parent and teacher should become partners in helping a child develop linguistic skills. When both parent and teacher share in planning a child's activities, a favorable climate of trust and joint responsibility is established. Learning then becomes a two-way process between instructors and parents.

If parents and teachers are to become co-workers in planning and instituting a child's educational program, they must treat each other with respect and honesty. The teacher should not allow personal judgements or bias to interfere with parent counseling. Often feelings of disapproval can be projected unknowingly by a lack of eye contact or sudden stiffness and silence. When a teacher makes value judgements, she may provoke feelings of resentment and guilt as well as create an uncomfortable counseling atmosphere. Taylor writes "we cannot force sympathy and love, we can only win them by treating others, including our children, with the respect, courtesy and appreciation we hope to receive from them." When a mother pours out her frustration in controlling her child and says that beating Johnny is the only way he will mind, the teacher should not at first openly express her feelings of disagreement with this method of discipline. Rather, she should empathize with the mother's frustrations and feelings of failure and then offer alternatives for controlling behavior. Empathy is perhaps the most important quality needed for gaining parent cooperation.
To be empathetic, the counselor must be an objective and active listener. The teacher should rephrase a parent's comments in a question such as "Do you mean that...?". This will help the teacher to better understand the parent's communicative intent and allow the parent to feel understood. Also, the curious parent will feel more at ease in asking questions to clarify the teacher's intent.

A last important quality conducive to a successful teacher-parent relationship is "acceptance". Belief in a person despite his differences of opinion and lifestyle is basic to true communication. Rogers writes "the facilitator's prizing or acceptance of the learner is an operational expression of his essential confidence and trust in the capacity of the human organism." In other words, when one can listen and accept another individual with unique, perhaps radically opposing attitudes, without feeling that one's own attitudes are threatened, then one can learn from and respect another's ideas.

Acceptance is difficult when parents show resistance toward the teacher's suggestions. The teacher must try to understand the underlying reasons for parent's hostility and bitterness. At the same time, the teacher must try to control her defensive instincts toward rejection. It is often necessary for a teacher "not only to accept 'difficult mothers' but also to help them accept themselves." Emotional resistances should be eliminated so that mutual communication and learning can occur. Some reasons for parental resistance toward teachers will be revealed.

Modern nuclear families have a much greater responsibility in child rearing than when extended families of grandparents, aunts, uncles etc. shared in raising children. Even those trapped by jobs with long hours with kids to care for when they return home have desires for self fulfillment. Lack of time and low opinions of self worth can cause anxiety, tension, and neurosis. Mothers who spend all day with their children may have a deep sense of loneliness because their youngsters do not provide adult companionship and support. Husbands who
come home exhausted from their jobs may simply feel too tired
to talk and share in household chores.

However, society has found many outlets for parents who
seek psychological help. Marriage counselors, psychologists,
sociologists, family therapy groups, and a large variety of
books are available to help restore emotional health. The
preschool provides additional help for trapped mothers.
"Placing the child in any good nursery school helps the young
mother to resolve one of her most typical conflicts - wanting
to be a good mother, yet craving time and opportunity to be
a person in her own right."

When parents come for teacher conferences they bring fears
and frustrations about their child and life with them. The
teacher may become the "sounding board" for parent aggravations.
The mother may have no one else with whom to pour out her
feelings and the way the teacher handles a parent's openness
will set standards for their future relationship. Wylie reminds
the teacher that she is not a "psychologist, psychiatrist, or
family guidance counselor and the conference should involve
only the interests of the child: his adjustment, behavior,
attitudes, abilities and needs." However, the author tends
to believe that the teacher cannot only deal with a child's
interests for in dealing with the parent's feelings we are
indirectly aiding the child by helping his parents provide a
happy, emotionally balanced atmosphere. However, the teacher
should not overstep her area of professional endeavor, offering
advise in areas for which she is not trained. Also, care must
be taken not to become tangled in a family's problems.
Teachers are counselors who offer suggestions and referrals
should be given for outside professional help. It is the
parent's responsibility to utilize and enforce teaching ideas.

Mothers and fathers may be resistant toward teachers
because of their own unhappy experiences in school. The
instructor must help the parent to realize that they are
not opposing forces but rather cooperative allies in helping
a child grow. Too often the teacher is seen as a domineering
authority figure instead of a mutual partner. Honesty in
displaying attitudes usually comes forth gradually after the teacher and parent have had time to adjust and understand the other's role in child development.

Educated teachers, schooled in early human growth know a great deal about the characteristics and needs of preschoolers. Likewise, each mother regards herself as an expert on her own child's development. Indeed the mother is an authority in knowing her own child's mannerisms, reactions, and wants because she has watched her child's behavior since birth. The mother may resent the teacher's suggestions especially when the young teacher has no children of her own. Insecure mothers may feel they must defend their methods of child rearing. She may experience failure if she feels the teacher could help her child when she couldn't. This resentment may cause the mother to lose focus of her responsibility in the child's language learning. Parents and teachers need to recognize each other's contributions in the youngster's growth and not view a child only as a source of personal fulfillment.

A close parent-teacher relationship has many psychological and educational benefits. Lancaster and Gaunt stated "Close communication between parent and teacher about such matters as the arrival of a new baby, a death, or unhappy major or minor disruption in the family means a teacher can anticipate possible problems and help the distressed child." Earlier, it was shown how emotional problems within a family can cause language delay. Divorce has often caused a change in the child's school performance. Culturally deprived children may have additional inner conflicts when they cannot put their feelings into words nor express their feelings verbally in a socially accepted manner.

"An added bonus of any parent education plan is that as you get to know parents better you find it easier to understand their children." Likewise, in helping the parent to learn, the teacher helps the child to learn. Family relationships are also improved. The teacher can help parents to view their child more objectively by pointing out specific normal and deviant behaviors and suggesting methods of behavior modification.
When one considers the amount of time a child spends in the home environment, one begins to understand why teaching the primary caretaker to provide normal educative experiences is essential.

Barb Tizard bluntly shows us the significance of home learning by stating:

A child who attends a half-day nursery school from his third to his fifth birthday will have spent only about four percent of the waking hours of the first five years of his life at school. Yet these are the years during which intellectual growth is most rapid.

Parent interest, attitudes and values have a direct influence on a child's performance. To be effective, the school must extend itself into the child's natural setting, (the home), and teaching must come not only from the teacher but the child's natural teacher, the mother (and/or father). Children do not develop in isolation of their cultural background. The teacher is relied upon to maintain home learning and keep harmony between the home and school experiences.

How can the teacher actively involve parents in the home language program? First, the parent and teacher must become cooperative, interdependent co-workers in sharing educational responsibility. Taylor writes "The realization that mothers (and fathers too) can be partners in both planning and carrying out educational set-ups and procedures is one of the most important understandings a teacher can attain." The parent must not depend on an instructor solely for teaching ideas. The parents should share successes and failures in child education with the teacher. Professionals should build parent's confidence in teaching by praising even small teaching achievements. Criticisms should be given in an open, honest manner, often with teachers sharing the responsibility for mistakes. Positive suggestions should be given more frequently than negative comments.

Mothers and fathers can be encouraged to utilize special talents which aid skill development in the whole preschool group. A parent may be gifted in music, painting, clay, telling stories or other areas. Encouraging parents to utilize their
special talents has a three-fold purpose. The children will learn from entertaining new experiences. Secondly, the parents will become more involved and enthusiastic about the language program. Lastly, the teacher will discover new interesting methods of teaching.

Parent cooperatives (groups organized by parents for the education of preschool children) provide unique benefits for children and parents. In the presence of a qualified preschool teacher, parents can share their child's needs for learning experiences and their own needs for self fulfillment. Parents often receive more guidance from other parents than they could obtain from the teacher alone. Programs such as Head Start consider parent participation a major requirement in preschool education.

If a child spends three hours in a stimulating environment, but returns to a barren atmosphere lacking essentials for normal development for the rest of the day he may become confused and upset. Preschool learning can even be rejected without parent guidance. In conclusion, successful remediation depends on viewing a child's handicap in relation to his total environment. This can be achieved only by interdisciplinary action and careful parent counseling.\(^\text{13}\)
FOOTNOTES


5. Rogers, Carl, p. 10

6. Taylor, Katharine, p. 271

7. Ibid, p. 15


10. Wylie, Joanne, p. 37

11. Lancaster and Gaunt, p. 25

12. Taylor, Katharine, p. 280

CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE FOR SPEECH DEVELOPMENT

Some simple suggestions for parents in structuring the home environment to allow for successful language teaching will be presented in this section. Two types of teaching strategies will be discussed and employed in the subsequent home language activities. Behavior modification is used as a method of language elicitation, change and maintenance through control of stimuli which precedes and follows the speech act. The learning theory upon which this teaching strategy is based states that the consequences of behavior can either accelerate or decelerate future occurrence of that behavior. A second teaching strategy known as the "incidental approach" will help the parent to utilize non-structured everyday experiences in teaching language to their child. Before discussing these teaching strategies in greater detail, the following precautions suggested by Baker should be considered to insure successful language teaching.

Structured language sessions should occur daily for optimum results. The length of home language sessions will depend on the individual child's age and attention span. It is doubtful that a child below age 5 will attend a parent and sit in a chair for thirty minutes initially. Therefore, beginning teaching sessions should last only 5-10 minutes and gradually be increased to 20-30 minutes a day. Scheduling session at approximately the same time each day will help children to follow a routine. Teaching sessions should be scheduled during a quiet time at the house when the child is alert and attentive. Often, in the early afternoon before the spouse and other children return and after the
child has played physically and eaten lunch is a good time to schedule training sessions.

Before a child can learn, he must first be able to attend and removing visual and auditory distractions which interfere with attendance is the first step in effective teaching. The teaching area (often the kitchen table) should be kept clear of extra visual distractions such as toys, pets, or other household items. The room should also allow for auditory attendance through eliminating the television, radio, or other distracting noise.

Parents should be well prepared for teaching so that the session will run smoothly and effectively. Advance outlines of teaching plans will help the parent to maximize teaching time. Rehearsal of instructions and having materials within reach will reduce confusion in teaching. Wordy complicated instructions will only confuse the child and may cause him to become frustrated when he doesn't understand. Therefore, verbal directions for completion of a language task should be kept simple, consistent and concise. Materials used should be familiar, interesting and appropriate to the age level of the child. Providing verbal and manual models of what the child is to do and guiding him through a desired behavior will simplify the teaching task and make certain that the child understands what is required of him. Simplifying teaching increases the child's chances of successful performance in a task.

Baker also suggests several ways of helping the child attend the parent when he or she is speaking. First, the parent should be within the child's range of vision and hearing. Secondly, the parent should "get on the child's level" by squatting down or sitting so that the parent and child are at the same eye level.
Thirdly, calling the child's name and waiting for the child to look at the parent before giving directions will help attendance. The parent should make sure the child is looking directly in his eyes and not the surrounding area.

Using short familiar words and sentences will help to make directions meaningful to the child. Using the same words in labeling objects, people, and places will help the child learn their names. Also, Baker says that "children can understand words more easily when they are accompanied with meaningful gestures." Finally, the child should be talked to as much as possible during the day.

Van Riper says that children learn to speak only by recognizing that speech is a "useful tool." He suggests that one teach this lesson through the following two types of speech models.

1. **Self talk** is when the parent talks aloud to himself and verbalizes what he is doing, seeing, and hearing. (Example: While washing dishes a mother says, "Where spoon, Mommy wash spoon, scrub, scrub, now spoon clean.")

2. **Parallel talk** is when the parent not only verbalizes his own thoughts but also those of the child. (Example: While the child is dressing, the mother says, "Jimmy find shirt, put shirt on, button shirt, shirt feels soft.")

In this way the parent can provide meaningful language input at approximately the same time the child is experiencing language. Self talk and parallel talk are two important types of incidental teaching procedures.

A final important reminder is that children acquire language in small sequential steps. A child may need to review a language task many times before he can spontaneously perform the activity.
Therefore, language teaching must progress from simple to complex tasks in small stages. Pointing to an object is usually much easier for a child than verbally identifying an object. The parent should begin with a task he knows the child can successfully do and then gradually introduce more difficult tasks as the child develops a skill. Task sequencing will help to avoid failure and allow the child to develop a more positive self concept from successful speech experiences.
The Behavior Modification Approach

Modern linguists continue to debate whether or not language is learned through experiences or innately developed and revealed through maturation. Ryan asks, "If we assume that language is determined through maturation, then should we give up on the non-language child and just wait for him to mature." Preceding studies have shown the harmful effects of experiential deprivation during the critical learning years from birth to age five. Merely "waiting" for the non-language preschooler to develop speech could irreversibly damage his language and cognitive learning potential.

B.F. Skinner states that "all human behavior is a product of environmental influence." According to the learning theory, language is a result of environmental stimulation. If one assumes that language is learned through various sensory experiences then one may hypothesize that the non-language child has not been exposed to normal linguistic experiences or has been exposed to abnormal linguistic experiences. A third possibility exists that the child may have been exposed to normal linguistic experiences, but may not learn in the same manner as the average child. The logical alternative is to teach language through providing environmental experiences.

The behavior modification approach is based on a learning sequence known as "conditioning." The conditioning process involves a stimulus, response and a consequence. These terms have been defined by Ryan.

1. Stimulus. This is the auditory (verbal model) or visual (picture, object, or action) or other type of stimulus which precedes the response and sets the stage for its occurrence.
2. Response. the oral or nonoral behavior desired from the child.

3. Reinforcement. The verbal, token or other type of reinforcer which is given after each correct response.

The consequence of a behavior has the potential to increase or decrease the frequency of future occurrences of that behavior. Consequences which decrease a response are termed "punishers" and consequences which increase a response are called "reinforcers." The parent can increase language behaviors by control of the stimulus and consequence of language. For instance, the teacher or parent presents a ball and says, "ball." If the child immediately imitates her verbal model or approximates imitation of the model, he is rewarded for his correct response by the parent smiling, saying "good," and perhaps giving the child his favorite kind of cookie. The child soon learns that he can receive positive reinforcement for specific types of behavior and tends to exhibit these desired behaviors more often in hopes of receiving reinforcement.

The behavior modification approach is used frequently in everyday situations. For instance, the parent rewards the child for not crying in the doctors office with a lollipop or the parent slaps the toddler's hand and says, "no" when he reaches for the hot pan on the stove. Behavior is modified through its immediate positive or negative consequences. Reinforcers and punishers can take many forms and differ with each child. Becker defines three groups of reinforcers which are important to a mother.

1. Social reinforcers involve the parent's behavior such as words of praise, attention, a smile, or nearness.
2. Token reinforcers are things which can be exchanged for other reinforcers such as money, poker chips, points, or gold stars.

3. Activity reinforcers are behaviors children like to perform when given a chance. These might include running, games, art activities, singing, or eating.

Good edible reinforcers the parent can use might include dry cereal, peanuts, popcorn, raisons, small jello squares, or other foods which the child especially likes.

The schedule of reinforcement is also important. When a new behavior is being acquired, reinforcement should be given on a fixed schedule of 100% or consistent reinforcement for every response. As a behavior becomes stronger the schedule of reinforcement may decrease to reinforcement for every 2 correct responses (50%) and then gradually be reduced to 10% or reinforcement for every 10 correct responses. To maintain an acquired behavior the parent may gradually shift to variable, intermittent reinforcement after a specific number of responses.

Often parents may unknowingly reward poor behavior by giving attention (a social reinforcer) to undesirable behavior and not rewarding good behavior. For instance, the parent may yell at the child for feeding the dog his supper, but neglect to praise the child for eating all of his meal. It is helpful for the parent to list those behaviors which they want to strengthen and those they want to weaken. Ignoring the child when he runs around the house or exhibits other distracting behaviors should decrease such behavior if the parent is consistently reinforcing good behavior such as when the child is sitting in his chair and is visually attending.
The parent should not insist that a child perform perfectly on his first attempt at a task. Rather, the child should be reinforced for improvement or small steps toward the desired behavior. In this way, responses are gradually modified or shaped and the child until the child can successfully accomplish a desired task. Failure on an initial task signals the need for the task to be broken into smaller components that the child can achieve. "The teaching process can be speeded up if the learning task proceeds logically and sequentially in small steps from the easier to more difficult levels of response complexity in a progression known as programming." 10

The criterion "refers to a standard of performance of the child." 11 It establishes the amount of correct responses the child will need before he is ready to move to a more difficult language task. For instance, before the child can say dog, he must be able to produce the individual sounds in this word and then blend the sounds together. The criterion may vary with tasks but a common criterion of 10 successively correct responses over three teaching sessions will be used to determine progression to a more difficult task. A daily record of the child's responses in the teaching session should be kept so that the his progress can be measured. A response chart should include the child's name, date of the session, target behavior desired and the amount of times the behavior was correctly or incorrectly produced as compared to the total number of responses. The parent is reminded that only observable behavior can be measured such as "speaking, pointing, or raising of the hand." Valuing, knowing, and understanding are not behaviors which can be overtly measured; rather these words can be assumed only through seen actions.
The Incidental Approach

Incidental teaching is defined by Baker as "teaching when the opportunity arises during regular daily activities." This type of teaching is an excellent way to review and test what has been taught in the child's structured language sessions. Words usually have the greatest meaning for the child when they are said within the context of his natural communicative experience. If words such as ball, dog, and apple were introduced in the structured language session through object and picture stimulation, these noun labels could be reinforced later when playing catch with the ball, when feeding the dog or buying apples at the store.

Self talk and parallel talk should be given by parents as much as possible to give the child a variety of language experiences upon which to grow. The parent should remember that language input usually precedes verbal or nonverbal (pointing, or gesturing) output. If parents assume the role of the child's primary teacher, they become responsible for providing his linguistic experiences.

McLean and McLean present a transactional approach to language acquisition. The transactional model consists most basically of three major interacting components, cognitive, social, and linguistic which each represent one variable of the young child's experience and development. This model implies that:

A child acquires language through interactions with his environment and that from these interactions he derives the cognitive, and social basis which underlies his mastering of the linguistic code of his culture. The specific linguistic code is acquired through the child's participation in a dynamic partnership with mature language users in his environment.

The transactional approach suggests that language should be offered in situations which elicit the need for communication and involve
human interaction. Structured language training sessions do not always provide for natural communicative responses. The child may speak only in anticipation of being rewarded with a cookie. Incidental language training is needed to help the child learn the pragmatic use of speech in his world.

The child may be more willing to point to body parts when he is taking a bath than by verbal command during structured teaching sessions. The parent should utilize common daily experiences such as meal preparation, bathing and brushing teeth, washing clothes, and dressing in teaching a wide variety of language concepts. In incidental teaching the child may offer more spontaneous language since he is under less pressure to perform for a reward. However, social reinforcers such as smiling, verbal praise and hugs should always be given for appropriate language behaviors. Incidental teaching proficiency may take the parent longer to achieve since it is difficult to practice for these impromptu teaching sessions. Nevertheless, the determined parent can create excellent language training sessions out of the most menial tasks such as taking out the garbage. Spontaneous language teaching can play a significant role in carryover of trained language teaching in the child's natural environment.
FOOTNOTES


2. Ibid, p.p. 6-8

3. Ibid, p. 41

4. Ibid, p. 23


10. Gray and Ryan, p. 10

11. Ibid., p.20

12. Baker, p. 3

ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Home and school are two of the most significant influences on a young child's learning. "In the United States, the school has become large and powerful and as it has grown has tended to become more separate from the family, especially in low income areas."¹ Many educational programs for the culturally deprived preschooler have found that the home and school must work together if children are to experience success in school. Therefore, educators of preschool children often teach parents how to teach their own children. Some parents may have lacked success in school and are truly in need of academic training. Others do not know how to convey their knowledge to children in terms they can understand. Some parents may have lacked success in school and are in need of academic training. This home program of activities for language stimulation is aimed at helping the parent increase the quality and quantity of their child's linguistic experiences. Activities are divided into two major areas: receptive and expressive language. Receptive language has been defined by Airk and Kirk as the child's ability to "understand and recognize what is seen and heard." Expressive language refers to the ability of the child to "express ideas through speaking gesture or movement."² Since receptive language is thought to precede verbal output, receptive language activities will be discussed first.
Receptive Language Activities

Auditory listening skills are a prerequisite to the development of receptive language skills in the normal hearing infant. The hierarchy of language skills (both receptive and expressive) will follow sequential objectives for specific age levels which were suggested by Sitnick and Arpan in *Parent-Infant Communication* (1977). The age levels (shown in months) determine at what age the child should be taught a specific task and can be expected to perform such a task. The parent should remember that with the language delayed preschooler will need to begin at lower task levels than those listed for their chronological age. Later receptive language activities should be taught in conjunction with expressive language activities, since these areas of language develop simultaneously although receptive skills may be at higher levels than expressive skills. The parent is also reminded to provide a model of the desired task before expecting the child to attempt a task. The criterion for skill accomplishment and progression to the next level of difficulty is four out of five correct consecutive responses in a given task.

0-6 Months

**Objective:** Awareness of Voice and Sound

**Materials:** Alarm clock, kitchen utensils, telephone, rattle, squeak toy, musical instruments, running water

**Activity:** Voice and Environmental Sound Stimulation

The parent should employ self talk and parallel talk or singing while dressing, feeding, playing or bathing the infant. When the baby looks at the parent who is talking, the baby should be rewarded with smiling, verbal praise and fondling. The mother should begin producing sounds within the baby's sight and gradually move...
farther away and out of the baby's visual range, standing behind the baby's crib or the door. Visual attendance or turning toward the sound should be rewarded with the same measures as above. When the child is around three months of age, the parent should play loud objects near the child such as an alarm clock or squeak toy and reward the child's attendance with verbal praise and by letting him play with the object. To increase difficulty of this task, the objects should be played farther and farther away from the child and the parent should help the child locate a sound source in the closet or in a different room.

Objective: To anticipate feeding by associating noises and visual stimuli in meal preparation.
Materials: All kitchen items involved in food preparation
Activity: Meal time

The parent should use self talk as she prepares the food and have the infant watch from a nearby high chair. The infant must be close enough that he can easily see and hear what the mother is doing. The parent should draw attention to sounds as she stirs the bowl, runs water in washing dishes, pours milk, etc. The baby may begin to make sucking noises in anticipation of feeding. The parent should look toward the baby when he makes these sounds and reward him by talking to him and giving him food.

7-9 Months

Objective: To demonstrate understanding of parental gestures
Materials: Ball, edible reinforcers
Activity: Gesture Play

Since words are often more meaningful when they are accompanied by gestures, the parent should combine appropriate gestures with their speech when talking to the infant. The parent may find that the baby's first words are accompanied by gestures such as when he says "bye-bye" and waves. Therefore, parents should play games with the child such as having the child imitate them waving and saying "bye-bye" when other people, animals, or toys are taken from the room. The baby should be given an edible reinforcer such as cereal, raisin, etc. for imitation of the gesture. Also an object can be placed in front of the infant and the parent may ask the child to give them the object while opening up their hands. The child should be rewarded for giving the object to the parent. The parent should demonstrate this action with another parent and reward the other parent appropriately. The parent may also call the child and open up their hands. If the child moves toward the parent he or she should be rewarded by verbal praise and a hug.

Objective: To visually attend the person or object named.
Materials: family Members
Activity: Learning the Names of Family Members

Parents should refer to each other as "mommy" or "daddy" in the
child's presence or by other appropriate identifiable names. The parent may have the child help at dinner by giving food to another family member. The parent may ask the child to "Give Daddy cookie." The child should be rewarded by that family member with a hug, praise or other reinforcer. When cleaning house, the parent can have the child help by having him take clothing items such as shoes, or other personal items to that person.

Also, pictures of other family members on a vacation or other family event may be shown to the child. The child should be asked "Where's mom?", and the child should respond by pointing. Pointing out family members in the pictures should be a prerequisite to the child's performance. Pointing should be rewarded appropriately.

**10-12 Montne**

**Objective:** To perform a physical task when given a one-two word command.

**Materials:** Puppet (Can make one out of a small paper bag)

**Activity:** Following Directions

Parents should give each other directions such as "eat a cookie," "sit in chair," "throw ball," etc. and the parent should respond appropriately and be rewarded for their action. Next the child should be asked to perform one-two word commands and be rewarded for appropriate responses. Often the use of a puppet can help in obtaining the child's responses by making a game out of following directions.

**Objective:** To visually attend when the child's name is called.

**Materials:** mirror, personal objects of the child such as clothing, and toys.

**Activity:** Where's Johnny?

The parent should call out the child's name and reward the child each time he attends with an edible reinforcer and verbal praise. It may help to say the child's name and place a mirror in front of the child at the same time so that he associates his name with his visual image. Thirdly, the parent should present personal objects of the child and say phrases such as "Johnny's shoe." If the child visually attends and/or makes a motion toward the object, he should be given the object as reinforcement and verbally praised.

**13-14 Montne**

**Objective:** To retrieve an object when shown a picture of that object.

**Materials:** Toy Catalog and toys

**Activity:** Picture-object matching

This idea was presented by Allday. The parents can order toys which look identical to those pictured in a toy catalog. Next,