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Language Acquisition, Development, and Bilingualism in Young Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

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Learning Outcomes

- Understand the stages of typical language acquisition
- Recognize common signs of language delay
- Apply strategies from bilingual language acquisition to support language development in DHH children



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Clarifying Terminology

Language

A complex system of communication used by groups of people that shapes thought- tied to specific areas of the brain

Modality

The manner in which language is expressed (i.e. sign, speech, print, touch)

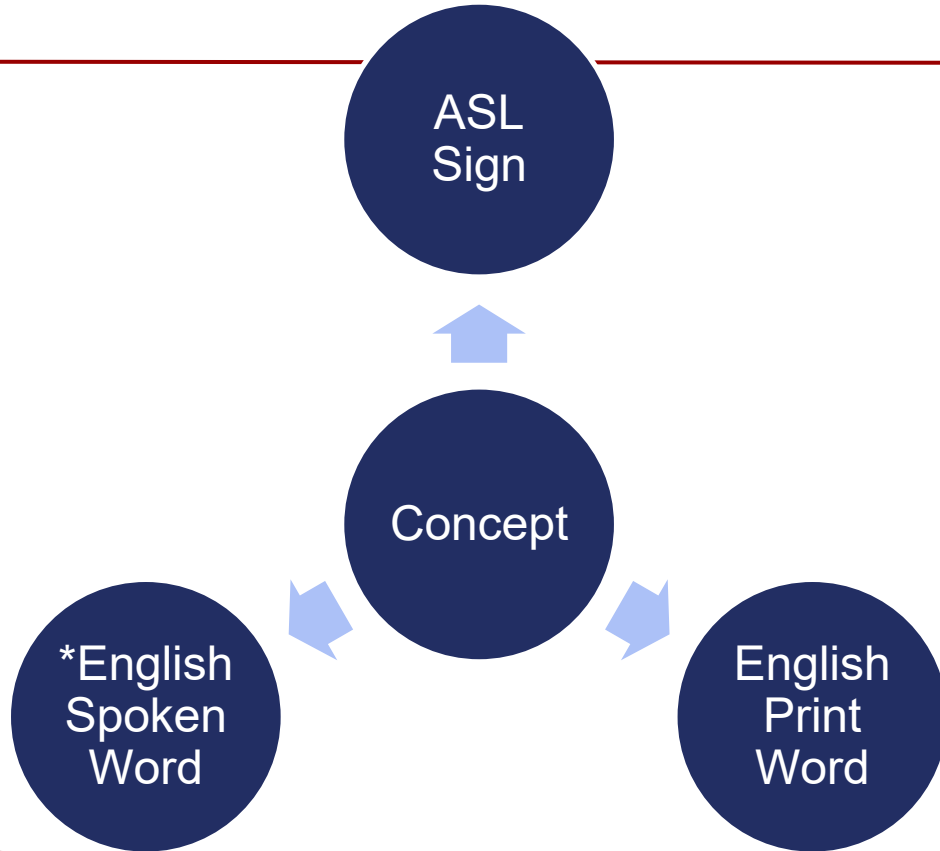
Communication

The act of conveying intentions to another



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How Bimodal Bilingualism Works



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0-11 Months

- Responds to affect
- Responds to own name
- Understands common words
- Communicates in a variety of ways (crying, cooing, smiling)
- Can point to objects and express wants/needs
- “Babbling”
- Makes eye contact
- Initiates interaction with adults

8-20 Months

- Concentrates on most interesting thing(s) in environment
- Easily distracted by language around them
- Can answer simple wh-questions
- Understands more language than they can produce
- Understands that things have names
- Uses words to communicate
- Makes up their own words

16-26 Months

- Enjoys rhythmic patterns in language
- Understands verbs and instructions using them
- Puts two or more words together
- Uses a variety of word types

Effects of Delay

- An inability to arrange a narrative in sequential order
- Inability to organize facts into cause & effect relations
- Inability to explain “why” or “how”
- Lack of awareness of the conversational partner’s need for context- assumption that the partner “knows what’s meant”

Gulati, 2018

Language Acquisition and the Effects of Delayed Exposure



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Detailed Look at Language Milestones

From The Clerc Center



Setting Language in Motion: Family Supports and Early Intervention for Babies Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Communication Language Milestones

The skills and milestones identified here are those that appear most often in research about early language development in children who are deaf or hard of hearing. This chart is not meant to be exhaustive but instead to highlight some of the critical milestones of language development. If there are any concerns about a baby's language development, his or her early intervention provider or pediatrician should be contacted.

Receptive Skills

Birth-6 months:

- Quiets and/or smiles when interactions occur
- Appears to recognize caregivers (and quietes if crying)
- Moves head in the direction of people
- Notices toys that are visually attractive
- Appears to attend to signed or spoken language
- Follows eye gaze
- Enjoys being held and/or cuddled
- Laughs when sees fingers approach to tickle
- Begins to respond to attention-getting behavior (e.g., waving, changes in vocalization, turning the lights on and off)

6-12 months:

- Enjoys games like Peek-a-Boo and Pat-a-Cake
- Responds to changes in facial expression
- Begins to recognize signs or speech for common items (e.g., more, cup, shoe, juice)
- Begins to respond to gestured or vocalized requests (e.g., "Come here.")
- Appears interested in the same items or objects as his or her parent(s)

MODULE FOUR Launching Communication and Language Through Sign

1-2 years:

- Points to a few body parts when asked
- Follows simple commands and understands simple questions (e.g., "Roll the ball.", "Where's your shoe?")
- Attends to simple short stories
- Points to something when asked (e.g., "Where's the dog?")
- Recognizes own name
- Recognizes names of family members

2-3 years:

- Understands differences in meaning (e.g., go-stop, big-little, up-down)
- Follows two requests ("Get the book and put it on the table.")
- Receptive vocabulary range (signed or spoken) >150
- Understands how and when to take turns in a conversation
- Responds to questions (e.g., "Who?"; "What?")
- Has some understanding of when things occurred (e.g., today, yesterday)
- Can identify and match colors when asked
- Enjoys stories and imitates the actions, facial expressions, movement, and other characteristics of characters from a story

Expressive Skills

Birth-6 months:

- Smiles at a familiar person
- Makes pleasure sounds (e.g., cooing) and/or plays with hands
- Cries differently for different needs



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Social Communication Skills – The Pragmatics Checklist

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS – THE PRAGMATICS CHECKLIST

Child's Name _____ Date _____ Completed by _____

Parent: These social communication skills develop over time. Read the behaviors below and place an X in the appropriate column that describes how your child uses words/language, no words (gestures - preverbal) or does not yet show a behavior.

Pragmatic Objective	Not Present	Uses NO Words (preverbal)	Uses 1-3 Words	Uses Complete Language
INSTRUMENTAL – States needs (I want...)				
1. Makes polite requests				
2. Makes choices				
3. Gives description of an object wanted				
4. Expresses a specific personal need				
5. Expresses help				
REGULATORY – Gives commands (Do as I tell you...)				
6. Gives directions to play a game				
7. Gives directions to make something				
8. Changes the style of commands or requests depending on who the child is speaking to and what the child wants				
PERSONAL – Expresses feelings				
9. Identifies feelings (I'm happy)				
10. Explains feelings (I'm happy because it's my birthday)				
11. Provides excuses or reasons				
12. Offers an opinion with support				
13. Complains				
14. Blames others				
15. Provides pertinent information on request (2 or 3 of the following: name, address, phone, birthday)				
INTERACTIONAL – <i>Me and You</i>				
16. Interacts with others in a polite manner				
17. Uses appropriate social rules such as greetings, farewells, thank yous, getting attention				
18. Attends to the speaker				
19. Revises/repairs an incomplete message				
20. Initiates a topic of conversation (doesn't just start talking in the middle of a topic)				
21. Maintains a conversation (able to keep it going)				
22. Ends a conversation (doesn't just walk away)				
23. Interjects appropriately or gives explanations of behavior				
24. Makes clarification				
25. Requests clarification				
26. States a problem				
27. Criticizes others				
28. Disagrees with others				
29. Compliments others				
30. Makes promises				
WANTS EXPLANATIONS – Tell me Why...				
31. Asks questions to get more information				
32. Asks questions to systematically gather information as in "Twenty Questions"				
33. Asks questions to solve a problem (What should I do? How do I know?)				
34. Asks questions to make predictions (What will happen if...?)				
35. Asks questions to tell you something (What should I tell you?)				
SHARES KNOWLEDGE & IMAGINATIONS – I've got something to tell you...				
36. Role plays w/with different characters				
37. Role plays w/props (e.g., banana as phone)				
38. Provides a description of a situation which describes the main events				
39. Tells a story which has been told to them				
40. Tells a story which has a beginning, several logical events, and an end				
41. Relates the content of a 4-6 frame picture story using correct events for each frame				
42. Creates an original story with a beginning, several logical events, and an end				
43. Explains the relationship between two objects, actions or situations				
44. Compares and contrasts qualities of two objects, actions or situations				
45. Tells a lie				
46. Expresses humor/sarcasm				
TOTAL FOR EACH COLUMN				

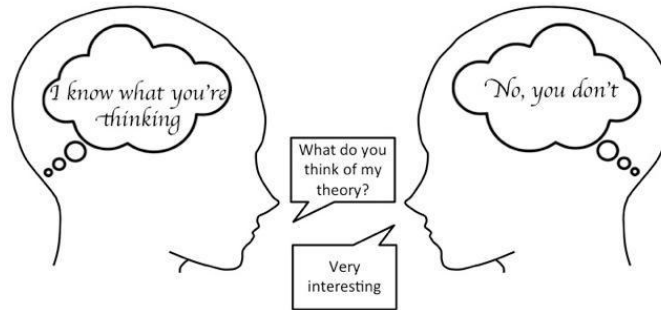
AUTHOR OF CHECKLIST: Gubert, D. (1999) Pragmatics Checklist (adapted from Simon, C.S., 1984).
 Authors: Beavis, Daphne, Jarrish, Mark. Yearlong name (2022). The missing link in language development of deaf and hard of hearing children: Pragmatic Language Development. Simon
 Speech Lang. 39(4), 291-309. https://www.speech.com.au/monographs/10_1001-2002-1118791.pdf
 The format of this information was designed by David L. Anderson, PhD, 2013. Supporting Success for Children with Hearing Loss <http://supportingsuccessforchildren.org>

- Normed for DHH Children
- All items should be mastered by Age 6



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Theory of Mind



For more, see Schick et al, 2007

Tips for Parents



- Engage attention before and while using language
- Use language intentionally
- Use language in context with visual and other experiential cues
- Be patient! Remember that language development will proceed in phases

Tips for Parents



- Label everything- with print, sign, speech...
- Sign on materials to connect visuals to signs
- Support language attempts by modeling accurate production and grammar
- Model asking and answering questions
- Have high expectations!



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