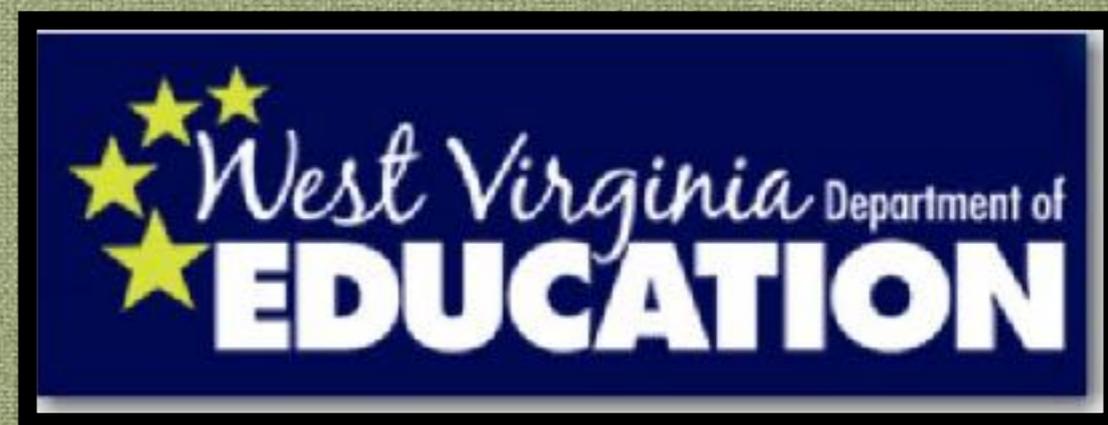


Building Language from the Child Up

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Disclosures and My Background

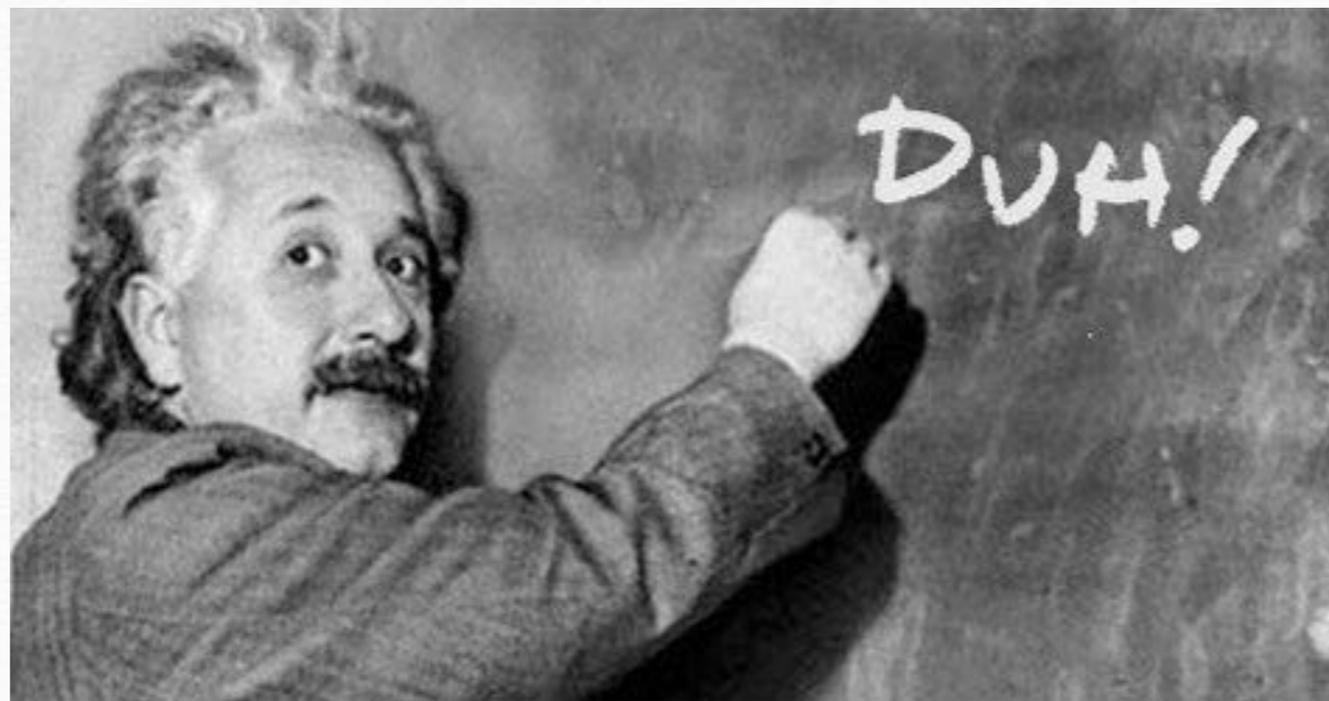
- WV ECPBIS Coordinator
- Work for WVATC at MU and the WVDE Office of Special Education
- Speech-Language Pathologist



PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- ❖ SIX STAGES OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN BIRTH TO FIVE
- ❖ LOOK AT EACH STAGE AND WAYS TO EXPAND LANGUAGE WITHIN THE STAGE DEPENDING ON CHILD
- ❖ DISCUSS THE WHY AND HOW A CHILD COMMUNICATES AT EACH STAGE
- ❖ HOW TO IDENTIFY THE CHILD'S LANGUAGE STAGE

**COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES
(SPEECH AND LANGUAGE) ARE
AMONG THE MOST WIDELY
REPORTED DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS
IN CHILDREN BIRTH TO FIVE**



Different Ways Kids Communicate

- ❖ Eye gaze
- ❖ Sounds (babbling, cooing)
- ❖ Gestures
- ❖ Facial Expressions
- ❖ Social Games
- ❖ Actions (pointing, hitting, pushing, crying...)
- ❖ Words
- ❖ Combining Words/Phrases
- ❖ Sentences
- ❖ Conversation

Why Is It Important to Stage Language Skills and Development?

Awareness of how and why a child communicates at each stage will give you a good idea of what the next step is and how you help the child get there.

6 Stages of Language Development

- ❖ **Stage 1: The Discoverer (birth to 8 months)**
- ❖ **Stage 2: The Messenger (8 to 12 months)**
- ❖ **Stage 3: First Words User (12 to 18 months)**
- ❖ **Stage 4: The Combiner (18 to 24 months)**
- ❖ **Stage 5: The Sentence Builder (2 to 3 yrs.)**
- ❖ **Stage 6: The Beginning Conversationalist (3 to 5 yrs.)**

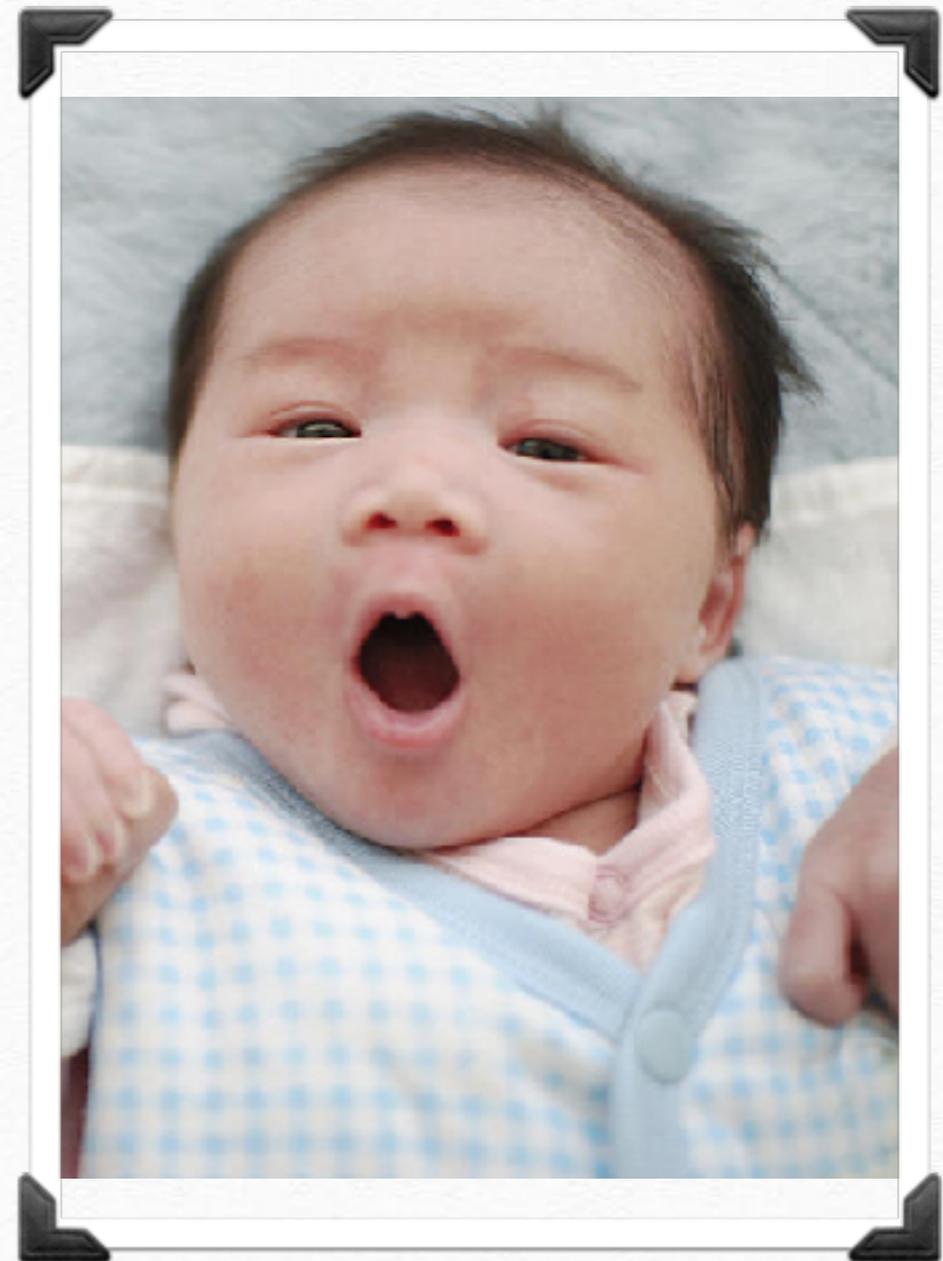
Stage 1: The Discoverer (Birth to 8 mo.)

"I cry, I make sounds, and I look- Figure out what I mean by hook or by crook!"

- ❖ Interested in others (look, smile, eye contact, make sounds)
- ❖ They don't yet send messages directly to their caregivers
- ❖ They are learning their behavior can affect others
- ❖ YOU interpret (or try at least) what they want
- ❖ Discoverer's express feelings through behaviors that you interpret as protests, signs of distress, requests, calls for attention, to play social routine games (like Peek-A-Boo)

How The Discoverer Interacts

- ❖ **First - eye contact, smiling, cooing back and forth**
- ❖ **Around 4 months they become interested in gaining your attention**
- ❖ **Engage in environment through their mouth**
- ❖ **Social routine games**
- ❖ **Becomes interested in toys and objects**



What The Discoverer Understands

- ❖ Non-verbal cues
- ❖ Gestures
- ❖ Intonational patterns
- ❖ General situations
- ❖ The Discoverer becomes a communicator who: communicates directly to adults with a goal in mind, expecting a response, and has developed joint attention

When The Discoverer has a Language Delay

- ❖ Children at any age who exhibit a SEVERE language delay could fall in this stage.
- ❖ Usually indicates associated delays in cognitive and/or motor development skills

Goals and Skills to Target with Delayed Discoverers

- ❖ Joint Attention - Precursor to Language
- ❖ Teach them to understand and then use non-verbals
- ❖ Imitation
- ❖ Social Routine Games
- ❖ Eye Contact
- ❖ Practice language and routines for situational scenarios (i.e. going for a walk etc...)
- ❖ Sound play like cooing and babbling if the child shows signs of trying to be verbal

Stage 2: The Messenger

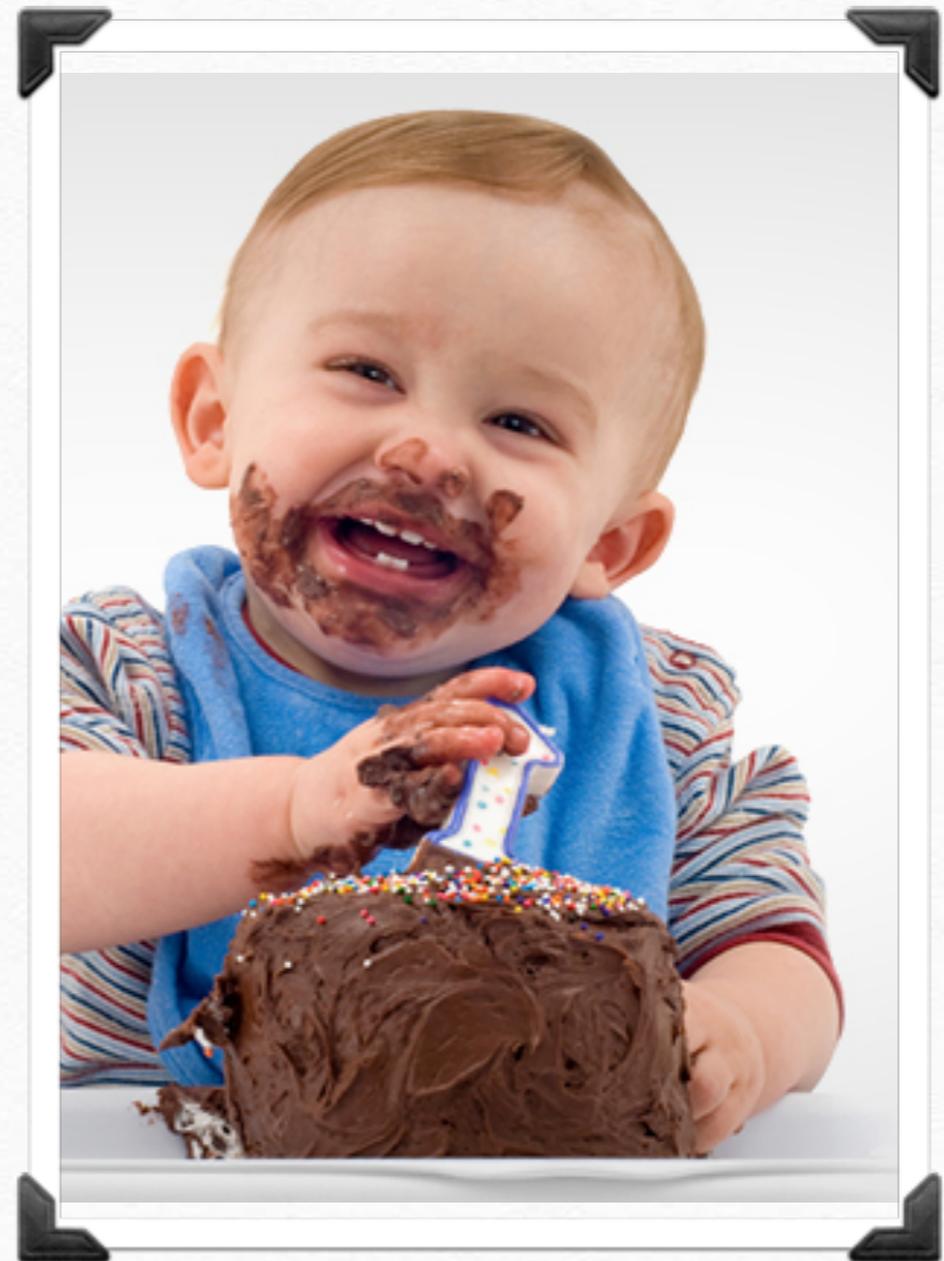
(8 to 13 mo.)

“With sounds, looks, and gestures I talk to you. Now help me learn a word or two.”

- ❖ Send messages with a goal in mind
- ❖ Sociable - meaning they communicate with you because they enjoy it, NOT just because they want something
- ❖ Have joint attention
- ❖ Point, show you, offer you things, wait for your response
- ❖ Communicate to direct your behavior or request an action from you

How The Messenger Interacts

- ❖ Use gestures like waving “bye”
- ❖ Pointing with purpose
- ❖ Enjoy games that involve imitation and back and forth
- ❖ Shaking head “No”
- ❖ By 9 mo. they can combine sounds with eye gaze
- ❖ Change the message if they don't get a response (repeating sound or gesture louder, tantrum)
- ❖ Use sounds “guh” as if they were words
- ❖ Use jargon (with adult like intonation)
- ❖ Start to use single words



What The Messenger Understands

- ❖ Seem to understand words
- ❖ Can follow some directions
- ❖ Not fully developed a true understanding of words
- ❖ Rely on cues from you in the form of actions, gestures, intonation, and situational contexts
- ❖ By 13 months, probably understands a few names of people or pets or objects

When The Messenger has a Language Delay

- ❖ An older child with a language delay may be in The Messenger Stage
- ❖ Difficulty learning to use words
- ❖ Difficulty learning to understand words and nonverbal communication
- ❖ Communicate with sounds and gestures and expressions
- ❖ Often, but not always, their ability to understand language is more advanced than their ability to express themselves.
- ❖ Makes it easier for you to communicate with them rather than them communicating with you

Goals and Skills to Target with the Delayed Messenger

- ❖ Enhance and build Receptive Language skills
- ❖ Encourage language with language enrichment activities
- ❖ Teach vocabulary
- ❖ Play Social Routine Games
- ❖ Read predictable stories and play predictable games
- ❖ Build on sounds and gestures and if they can't verbally give them non-verbal means of communication (pictures, sign language etc...)
- ❖ Get them to rely more on words and less upon sounds and gestures to get their message across
- ❖ Model, Model, Model

Stage 3: First Words User (12 to 18 mo.)

“From my mouth the words now pour, your job is to give me more!”

- ❖ Use about one or two words in the beginning
- ❖ Gradually progress to about 50 words (important benchmark)
- ❖ Early stages of learning how to have conversations with you
- ❖ Receptive language begins to take off during this stage
- ❖ Communicate mainly for social reasons but now they use words
- ❖ Talk about the present - the here and now

How The First Words User Interacts

- ❖ Use about 10 to 50 words that refer to people, objects, and events
- ❖ Words are often simplified versions of adult words (“baba” for “bottle”)
- ❖ Use words in large represented schemas (i.e. “dog” means all animals)
- ❖ Communication is social
- ❖ Will use repair strategies if they are not responded to (repeat, alter message)
- ❖ Same word may have different meanings in different contexts



When The First Words User has a Language Delay

- ❖ Could be Expressive Delay or both a Receptive and Expressive Delay
- ❖ Can't expand their vocabulary beyond single words
- ❖ Have difficulty participating in conversations
- ❖ Use words inconsistently (may hear once and never again)
- ❖ May use pictures or signs to communicate if Receptive Language is strong, progress with these is directly related to their level of understanding
- ❖ Don't use repair strategies

Goals and Skills to Target with Delayed First Words Users

- ❖ Teach kids to expand their utterances (don't expect this until the child is using approximately 50 words)
- ❖ Simple Language but not too simple!
- ❖ Use "grammatical simplified input," instead of "telegraphic input"
- ❖ Vocabulary Shower - Comment NOT Question
- ❖ Use any combination of pictures, words, signs, AAC, to expand verbal communication
- ❖ Teach them to alter communication beyond just requesting
- ❖ Take more turns in conversation if they initiate

Stage 4: The Combiner

(18 to 24 mo.)

"I put words together and begin to chat - Talk with me, it's as simple as that."

- ❖ Vocabulary growth spurt once kids get 50 words, grows to approximately 200 within a few months
- ❖ Begin to combine single words into 2 word phrases
- ❖ 2 word phrases can have multiple meanings i.e. "Mommy car." can mean, "That's Mommy's car" or "I want to go in your car."
- ❖ They start to ask Yes/No questions with adult like intonation i.e. "Go bye-bye?"
- ❖ Expressive negatives at the beginning of the sentence, i.e. "No bye-bye."
- ❖ Use the WH Questions Where? and What?
- ❖ Understand simple directions
- ❖ Point to pictures in a book
- ❖ Start to take more turns in a conversation with adult supports

How The Combiner Interacts

- ❖ Ask questions but still have difficulty answering questions
- ❖ Comment and take part in brief conversations
- ❖ Understand many words out of context
- ❖ Talk about events in the here-and-now more than about the past or future
- ❖ They add new information to a topic
- ❖ Talk in two word phrases and some single word utterances still



When The Combiner has a Language Delay

- ❖ They have difficulty moving on from single word utterances
- ❖ Receptive language skills may vary a great deal
- ❖ Have difficulty asking and answering questions
- ❖ Still labeling
- ❖ May not fully understand the POWER of communication
- ❖ Communication breakdowns occur
- ❖ Frustration with communication issues increases during this stage

Goals and Skills to Target with Delayed Combiners

- ❖ Use “grammatical simplified input,” instead of “telegraphic input” just like with First Words Users
- ❖ Gradually build upon vocabulary to get to that 50 word mark
- ❖ Build Receptive Language capacity - following directions, vocabulary, basic concepts, read and view print literacy
- ❖ Start targeting two word combinations that are AGENT + ACTION
- ❖ Work on turn-taking so you can build on that for brief conversations
- ❖ Combine two pictures and signs at a time (if non-verbal)

Stage 5: The Sentence Builder

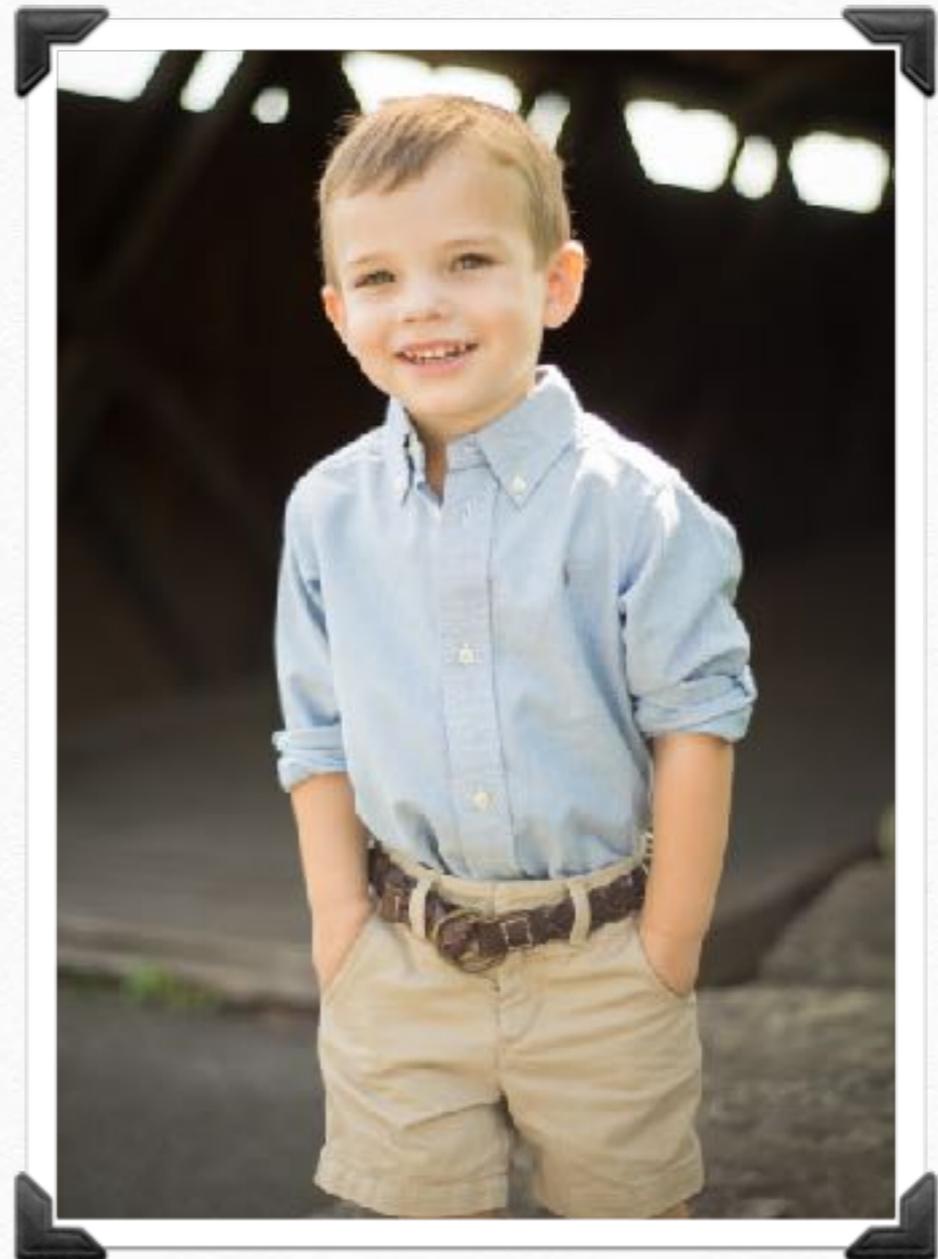
(2 to 3 yrs.)

“My words and sentences now have grown - I can tell little stories on my own.”

- ❖ Use two - five word sentences
- ❖ Hold short conversations
- ❖ Conversations are more successful if they start them
- ❖ Sentences become more grammatically correct
- ❖ They use prepositions, pronouns, verbs, plural -s, conjunctions, articles, and negatives expand to not, can't don't.
- ❖ Understand concepts
- ❖ Follow two-step directions
- ❖ Follow simple stories in books
- ❖ They use language to express feelings

How The Sentence Builder Interacts

- ❖ Shift in WHY they communicate - begin to use language to find out meaning and purpose
- ❖ Start to ask the dreaded “Why?” question
- ❖ Begin to use language imaginatively
- ❖ They use language to express feelings/emotions
- ❖ Begin to start to tell stories - although stories are usually disjointed



When The Sentence Builder has a Language Delay

- ❖ Don't expand mean length of utterance beyond 2 word phrases
- ❖ Don't use correct verb and pronoun forms
- ❖ Sentences are grammatically incomplete
- ❖ Difficulty describing feelings/emotions
- ❖ Conversational turn-taking is difficult, they don't understand a pause in conversation as their cue to talk
- ❖ Receptive Language may
- ❖ Questions aren't formed beyond What and Where

Goals and Skills to Target with Delayed Sentence Builders

- ❖ Take the child's words and add new ideas -expansion
- ❖ Extend the topic
- ❖ Provide materials and activities that promote peer and adult/child interactions
- ❖ Continue to comment more and ask questions less
- ❖ Use toys and sensory creative materials to target increased MLU and conversational language
- ❖ Use literacy to promote receptive and expressive language i.e. sociodramatic play, puppets, social stories, and sensory stories
- ❖ Ask questions that aren't widely open-ended, i.e. How and When may be too difficult, stick with Who, Where, What, and Yes/No

Stage 6: The Beginning Conversationalist (3 to 5 yrs.)

"I've learned to talk and take my turn, now my job is to talk to learn."

- ❖ Use long and complex sentences - usually more than 4 words in length
- ❖ Use language to think, learn, and imagine
- ❖ Use language to plan what they're going to do and to anticipate what will happen next
- ❖ Use language to create imaginary situations
- ❖ Conversations for extended periods of time
- ❖ Tell short stories
- ❖ Some grammatical errors continue due to over generalization of rule
i.e. "I runned."
- ❖ Vocabulary by age 5 is up to 5,000 words!

How the Beginning Conversationalist Interacts

- ❖ Take more turns in a conversation
- ❖ Persist when trying to get into a conversation
- ❖ They call out to get their listener's attention before talking
- ❖ Maintain eye contact appropriately
- ❖ Understand and follow stories, directions, complex questions including How and Why
- ❖ They use language to access knowledge and learn



Goals and Skills to Target with Delayed Beginning Conversationalists

- ❖ Work on building length of utterances to beyond 4 words in length
- ❖ Build proper grammatical and syntactical structures
- ❖ Model language that is adult like. No more simplification
- ❖ Set-up scenarios and situations that encourage and require socialization and interaction
- ❖ Teach conversation intentionally in methodical ways
- ❖ Use social stories if needed to teach expressive and receptive language skills
- ❖ Seek an SLP to complete a thorough evaluation and develop goals that cover the form, the use, and the content of language (morphology, semantics, syntax, phonology, and pragmatics)

Today's Takeaways

- ❖ **Language Staging can tell us: 1.) What to work on 2.) Why we're working on it 3.) Where to go next**
- ❖ **Children who are delayed work through these stages slower than typical developing children**
- ❖ **Language can be taught systematically and in stages to promote development in the early childhood years**
- ❖ **Some children with severe cognitive delays may not progress beyond one of the early stages**
- ❖ **Non-verbal children who may not develop speech because of motor difficulties will rely on signs, pictures, AAC to expressively communicate**
- ❖ **There is a direct connection between communication skills, early childhood experiences, and long-term academic success**

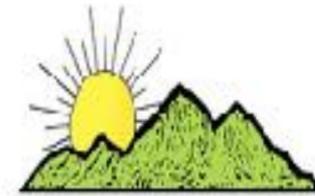


Questions?

THANK YOU!

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