

Discussion Guide for Module 10: Language Development: From Listening to Speaking

Module run time: 25 min

Estimated time to complete the module with discussion guide: 40-60 min

Below are recommended stopping points and suggested questions to use in your group's discussion. Please feel free to follow your group's lead and discuss topics and questions that are of greatest value to the group.

Key points:

- Babies begin making vowel-like sounds soon after birth. They soon add consonant sounds. Then they transition to syllables, words, and finally sentences. This pattern is similar across different cultures and languages.
- Children use different strategies to learn words and word combinations. During the process of learning, they sometimes make errors in word or sentence use. As they hear more language, their use of words and sentences becomes more adult-like.
- Language learning begins at birth! Those children who hear more language and experience more high quality interactions tend to produce more words and longer sentences.

Module synopsis:

Page 1: *Language Development: From Listening to Speaking*

Page 2: *Acknowledgments*

Page 3: *The Trajectory of Language Acquisition*

Page 4: *Sensitive Period for Language*

Page 5: *Vocal Play*

Page 6: *Canonical Babbling (Video)*

◉ Recommended stopping point

- Vocal play offers a great opportunity for caregivers to begin a conversation with infants. Why do you think it is important to communicate with infants before they can use real words?
- What are some features of early interactions that can grow a child's language?

Page 7: *Becoming a Communicative Partner*

Page 8: *How Do Children Learn Words?*

Page 9: *How Do Children Learn the Meaning of Words?*

◉ Recommended stopping point

- Symbolic gestures are things like pointing and gesturing. They represent an idea, like "look at this," or "give me that." Think of some other examples of symbolic gestures that children use. How are they similar to words? How are they different from words?

Page 10: *The Role of Social Interactions (Video)*

Page 11: *The Role of Social Interactions*

Page 12: *Vocabulary Growth*

Page 13: *Combining Words*

☞ Recommended stopping point

- Early words and early word combinations are similar across different cultures and languages. Why do you think this is?

Page 14: *One Fep, Two Feps*

Page 15: *Grammatical Errors*

☞ Recommended stopping point

- On page 9 we discussed underextension and overextension – when children under- or overgeneralize how to use a word. Then on page 13 we discussed the grammatical mistakes children make. Have you observed children using underextension or overextension or making grammatical errors? Why do you think children make these errors? How do you think caregivers should respond when they hear them?

Page 16: *Variability in Language Acquisition*

Page 17: *What Grows a Child's Language?*

Page 18: *What Grows a Child's Language? (continued)*

☞ Recommended stopping point

- Children from low-SES families tend to hear less language than children from high-SES families. But remember that SES does not *cause* these differences. Think of factors that may explain why children from low-SES families tend to hear less language.

Page 19: *Recap: From Listening to Speaking*

To learn more about language development, take a look at these resources:

ZERO TO THREE | Early Language & Literacy

<https://www.zerotothree.org/early-learning/language-and-communication>

<https://www.zerotothree.org/early-learning/early-literacy>

Parenting Counts | Developmental Timeline: Communication

<http://www.parentingcounts.org/information/timeline/#tab-communication>

TED | Patricia Kuhl: The linguistic genius of babies

http://www.ted.com/talks/patricia_kuhl_the_linguistic_genius_of_babies?language=en

We are constantly working to improve our materials. Do you have suggestions about topics to add to this guide? Did your group discuss something we didn't suggest? We'd love to hear from you! Please email your thoughts to us at ilabsout@uw.edu.