



LET'S TALK ABOUT LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT...

Language development involves a child's ability to communicate needs through facial expressions, gestures, body movements, and crying, and eventually through spoken words and/or sign language.

Home Visitors use the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment program to monitor a child's growth in all developmental areas. Under language development, we focus on how the child: *Uses an Expanding Expressive Vocabulary and Engages in Conversations.*

HOW ARE WE DOING?

For the period ending May 2013, **92%** of the children in our program were meeting or exceeding the developmental expectations for **Using an Expanding Expressive Vocabulary**; **84%** of children were meeting or exceeding the expectations for **Engages in Conversations**.

WHAT CAN I LOOK FOR?

- ❖ **Uses an Expanding Expressive Vocabulary:** Babies will coo and squeal when they are happy. They may cry when they are trying to grab a toy that is just out of their reach. Toddlers will begin to name familiar objects and people such as saying "Mama" when Mom comes to pick up at school, or signing drink when they see a sippy cup.
- ❖ **Engages in Conversations:** Babies will demonstrate this skill by cooing and babbling at an adult who is talking to them. An older baby may wave "bye, bye" or play games like peekaboo. A toddler may hold a brief conversation such as: Toddler says, "Juice?" Adult says, "Would you like juice?" Toddler nods head yes and says, "Juice please!"



ALICE'S ANGLE

Dr. Alice F. Torres
Director,
ACES Early Head Start

This issue of Early Years Matter is about **communication and language**! Your language skills are the strongest in your first language, so don't stop using it! Talking to your baby is THE MOST important activity you can do with your infant or toddler. The TV doesn't do it, videos don't do it. **You do!** Just talk. Be silly, sing, or tell stories, read cookbooks out loud while making a meal; anything that you enjoy.

Our **Let's Talk** message will help your baby prepare their mind for the tasks of reading and writing! Words represent things and ideas. The more words your child hears and understands, the more they know. From the moment our babies come in to the world, they are waiting for us to open our hearts and minds and **TALK to them!** So **Let's Talk** and together **we will** make a difference!

TALKING TO KK by Trisha Martin, Policy Council Chairperson

Early Head Start is a big support to me and my daughter. My daughter is two years old and it is time to start thinking about school. School Readiness helps me prepare to transition into the classroom. During Fun Fridays and with my home visitor, I learned about "Let's Talk". I learned about talking techniques that help develop my daughter's language; this will help her learn to read. When I am driving or in the supermarket, I am ALWAYS talking to my daughter. When she points to something, I tell her those are carrots and they are orange and crunchy. Before, I would always DO things (I would just grab the carrots and go), and use hand gestures and not talk. I am learning to slow down and observe my daughter and listen to what she says and keep talking! With School Readiness I am learning my child's development and I am supported by my home visitor to be the best parent I can be! **I am my daughter's BIGGEST cheerleader!**





BECKY'S BUZZ



by Rebecca Cuevas,
EHS Partnership
Manager

As Partnership Manager for our Early Head Start program, family and community partnership guides my work beginning with the enrollment process for all of our families.

The **Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework** is a tool to support school readiness opportunities for families with the goal of seeing families as equal partners in their children's learning and development.

Early Head Start staff is committed to working with families in the **Family Partnership Agreement process**, helping them to identify attainable goals. Families have the important role of observing, guiding, promoting, and participating in the everyday learning of their children at home or when out in the community.

Now's a good time to add a **"Let's Talk"** goal to your **Family Partnership Agreement!**

Here are some goals you can add to your **Family Partnership Agreement:**

- Attend to and respond to my infant or young child when they use vocalizations, words, and gestures. Notice what my child is interested in, looking at, playing with, and talking about.
- Describe the actions in which my child is involved.
- Name or describe the toys or materials my infant or toddler is playing with.

So, talking to your child now is very important. It can be **your goal** to increase the words you use with your child every day! Before you know it **you** will be growing your baby's **brain connections!**

Research has shown that the more **language** you use with your baby or toddler the more **brain connections** are made!

Brain connections:

1. Predict greater vocabulary size at age 3 and beyond
2. Predict reading and language skills by 3rd grade
3. Predict school readiness

Using more words helps young children to become better prepared for school both socially and academically!

CHRISSY & MOLLY

by Christine "Chrissy" Phillips, Policy Council & Kim Oathout, EHS Home Visitor

Chrissy's daughter Molly was almost a year old when she was enrolled in Early Head Start with Kim as her home visitor. Shortly after they started working together, Chrissy became concerned about Molly's language skills, even though her Ages and Stages Questionnaire showed that everything was age appropriate. "We had a conversation about it and I asked Chrissy how many words Molly was using. Chrissy had no idea," said Kim. So, Chrissy began keeping a running list, and every time that Molly said a new word it went on the list. She found that Molly says a lot more words than she had anticipated and now has no concerns about Molly's language skills.



"EHS has been a positive experience for me because I learn skills to teach Molly and learn about her development," says Chrissy (above with Molly and their home visitor, Kim).

According to Chrissy, Molly's speech has improved since she started attending the EHS Socializations and the playgroup at MacDonough School. She has filled out the enrollment paperwork for Community Classroom in the hope that there will be a space for Molly in September, which Chrissy expects will boost Molly's language skills even more as she plays with kids her age.



AVA'S "AH HA"

by Ava Hart,
EHS Mental Health Professional

A child's unique personal characteristic may affect how she/he engages with his/her caregiver. A child with an easy temperament may engage quickly and invite positive interactions on the part of the caregiver, whereas a child with a difficult or feisty temperament may invite less positive engagement. The effect of temperament on development, however, is dependent on the characteristics of both child and adult and is largely defined by the "goodness of fit" (Thomas & Chess, 1977).

Take a moment to review the results from the most recent **adult and child temperament scales** that you completed with your home visitor. Perhaps, it may reveal something new and/or validate what you already know about your communication patterns with your child. Help is just a phone call away when communication is a struggle that you don't need! **Let's Talk!**