It’s More Than Words: Oral Language as a Foundation for Children’s Thinking and Learning Ages 0-5

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Group Agreements
I encourage other’s perspectives

Please raise hands, ask questions and/or make comments

I like to hear about your experiences and ideas for promoting children’s development of oral language

We are a community of learners and teachers

Enjoy the experience and have fun
Objectives

• Focus on the development of oral language 0-5 years

• Briefly review the early childhood development of language development

• Review of the research and Importance of oral language for developing the whole child

• Ways to enhance everyday experiences with strategies and activities to increase oral language development in the home and child care environment

• Reflect on the strategies you will use
What are your early memories of developing oral language?

- What are your early memories?
  - Do they involve oral language?

- When you think of language, what comes to mind?
What is oral language and why is it important?
Communication
Process of exchanging ideas or information.

Language
How we communicate our thoughts and ideas, usually spoken but can be based on gestures, printed symptoms.

Speech
Motor behavior by which most people communicate their language. Can have speech (articulation) problems without underlying language problems.
Expressive and Receptive Language

Expressive
- Words and sentences we produce

Receptive
- What we understand

Oral Language: listening, speaking, thinking
Phonological awareness is the ability to hear, identify and manipulate the sounds of spoken language

– (hearing and repeating sounds, separating and blending sounds, identifying similar sounds in different words, hearing parts or syllables in word “hel-icop-ter”)
• Phonemic awareness is a **more advanced component** of phonological awareness
  – Ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words (identifying the three sounds in the word bug as /b/ /u/ /g/).

• The basic building blocks of language
  – The unique sounds that can be joined to create words
    • The sound of “p” in pin, pet, and pat
    • The sound of “b” in bed, bat, and bird

• Infants can distinguish many of these sounds, some of them as early as 1 month after birth
  – Can discriminate sounds they have never heard before such as phonemes from a foreign language (puh and buh)
Let's Play a Game!

A version of an “Alliteration Game”
Repition of the first consonant sound in a phrase.
Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers

Take an alphabet letter

Introduce yourself then take turns completing the sentence, “I took my friend_____ with a______, and _______.

10 minutes
Early Impacts of Social Interaction to Elicit Communication
Still Face Paradigm

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apzXGEbZht0
### Child's Cumulative Vocabulary (Words)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (Months)</th>
<th>Professional Families</th>
<th>Working Class Families</th>
<th>Families in Poverty</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 mos.</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 mos.</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
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<tr>
<td>36 mos.</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1200</td>
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</tbody>
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#### Barriers of Educational Achievement Emerge at a Very Young Age

30 million word gap

First glance, socio-economic is playing a factor BUT what is important is the **amount of language** and the **quality of what you say**

- Talking a lot related to more richness in the language, “talk a lot”
- Use longer and more complex phrases
- Use more open-ended questions
- Use less directives

**Language rich environments lead to more KNOWLEDGE**
Importance of Interactions with Caregivers: *Serve and Return*

http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/serve-return-interaction-shapes-brain-circuitry/
Connection in Relationships Helps Open Children’s Minds to Better Thinking
Why is Oral Language so Important?

- **Language is vital** for learning, social-emotional health, making friends, later success in school
  - Related to literacy which plays important role in civic participation, health care/wellness, economic success, social success

  - Children need to be **nurtured and supported** in their **language development**
  - **Quality early years environments and interactions** big impact on language development
  - The **earlier we support** children’s development of language the **better**
  - **Success in reading** influenced by time spent **talking with and listening to** a child when they are young
Children’s Language
Important Because...

- Allows children to relate to parents, peers and society
- Expression of wants and needs
- Importantly related to academic development
Quick Review of Early Language Development
Map the developmental milestones!
Children’s Development in Speech Sounds and Talk

Put the cards in the order of how a child’s development progresses:

- Up to 3 months
- 3-6 months
- 6-12 months
- 12-15 months
- 15-18 months
- 18 months-2 years
- 2-3 years
- 3-4 years
- 4-5 years
Speech Sounds and Talk

Vocalizations
- cooing, crying
- gurgling

Babbling
- Laughing noises get attention

Single Words
- Gestures (points or reaches) making sounds

Up to 3 months

10 Single Words
- Gestures (points or reaches) making sounds

3-6 months

20 Single Words
- Copies Gestures, uses intonation

6-12 months

Naming Explosion
- 50-100+ word per month (nouns)

12-15 months

50 Words, 2-3 words together
- Asks questions, uses p,b,m,w

15-18 months

300 words
- Descriptive, time, space, function, 4-5 words linked, use pronouns (me, him, she)

18 months-2 years

Four-Six Word Sentences
- Future & past tense, tells stories

2-3 years

20 Single Words
- Copies Gestures, uses intonation

3-4 years

Well formed sentences, easily understood, asks meaning of unfamiliar words

300 words
- Descriptive, time, space, function, 4-5 words linked, use pronouns (me, him, she)

4-5 years

Source: www.ican.org.uk
Turns towards familiar sounds, startled loud noises

Watches face when someone talks

Locates voice with accuracy, focuses on different sounds, clock, phone

Attends to music and singing, enjoys making sounds objects

Attends to music and singing, enjoys making sounds objects

Listens and responds to simple information/instructions

Listens with interest (still distracted easily), listens when prompts are provided

Focuses on an activity of their choice, may find difficulty being directed by adult, child’s name brings attention

Listens with interest (still distracted easily), listens when prompts are provided

Enjoyment in listening to longer stories, still can be difficult to attend to more than one task

Attention is more flexible: can listen while playing with a toys, coloring, etc.

Listening and Attention

Up to 3 months

3-6 months

6-12 months

12-15 months

15-18 months

18 months-2 years

2-3 years

3-4 years

4-5 years

Source: www.ican.org
Recognizes parent’s voice, calmed by familiar friendly voice

Shows excitement sound of approaching voices

Understands frequently used words, “all gone”, “bye-bye”, stops & looks hears name

Understands single words in context (cup, milk), understands more words than can say, understands simple instructions (“give to daddy”)

Understands single words, some two word phrases, recognizes and points to objects in books

Understanding of single words develops rapidly, understands more simple instructions

Understands wide range of single words, some two word phrases, understands simple stories with pictures, understands instructions with sequencing words, “first...after...last”, understands adjectives “soft, hard”, aware of more complex humor

Follows simple story without pictures, understands instructions with sequencing words, “first...after...last”, understands adjectives “soft, hard”, aware of more complex humor

Up to 3 months

3-6 months

6-12 months

12-15 months

15-18 months

18 months-2 years

2-3 years

3-4 years

4-5 years

Source: www.ican.org
Building the Language of Babies
Parents and adults help infants master language sounds by talking in a distinctive style

Think on your own...

In what distinctive way do adults talk to infants? How can this help infants master the language?
Building the Language of Babies

- **Parentese or Caregiverese** - High pitched tone of voice, slower tempo, simple sentences, stretched vowels
  - Not the same as baby talk
  - “Loook! Doogggy!”
  - Repetition of words
  - Strongly related to the child’s developing language skills
    - Adults using ‘parentese’ in 1:1 interactions is strongly and positively associated with infant’s current speech and word production at 24 months (Ramirez—Esparza, Garcia-Sierra, & Kuhl, 2014)
    - “Caregivers who provide quality speech input to their infants will likely observe who’s talking in the near future.”

- **Implications**: Engage in short one-on-one conversations with babies using ‘parentese’
**Songs & Finger Plays**

**Pat-A-Cake**
Pat A Cake, Pat A Cake,
Baker's Man.
Bake me a cake,
As fast as you can. (clap hands to beat)
Roll it. (roll hands)
Pat it. (pat lap or floor)
Mark it with a “B,” (finger write “B” on baby’s belly)
And put it in the oven for baby and me.
(tickle baby’s belly)

**Hickory, Dickory, Dock**
Hickory, Dickory, Dock
(Touch your baby’s toes, knees and hips)
The mouse ran up the clock.
(Tickle up your baby’s body)
The clock stuck one,
(Touch your baby’s nose)
The mouse ran down.
(Tickle down your baby’s body)
Hickory, Dickory, Dock.
(Touch your baby’s toes, knees and hips)

**This Little Piggy Went to Market**
This Little Piggy went to market.
This Little Piggy stayed home.
This Little Piggy had roast beef.
This Little Piggy had none.
And this Little Piggy went “wee wee wee” all the way home.

**Row, Row, Row Your Boat**
Row, Row, Row Your Boat,
Gently Down the Stream,
Merrily, Merrily, Merrily,
Life is but a Dream.

**I Hear Thunder**
(sung to the tune of “Are You Sleeping?”)
I hear Thunder, I hear Thunder, (drum feet on the floor)
Oh don’t you? Oh, don’t you? (pretend to listen)
Pitter-patter raindrops, (flutter your fingers for raindrops)
Pitter-Patter raindrops
I’m wet through, (shake your body vigorously)
So are you! (point to your child)

**Clean Up**
Clean-up, clean-up
Everybody get some toys.
Clean-up, clean-up
All the little girls and boys.
Clean-up, clean-up
Everybody do your share.
Clean-up, clean-up
Everybody, everywhere.

**The Itsy Bitsy Spider**
The itsy bitsy spider
Climbed up the waterspout
Down came the rain
And washed the spider out.
Out came the sun
And dried up all the rain
So the itsy-bitsy spider
Climbed up the spout again!

**Where is Thumbkin?**
(Hide both hands behind your back)
Where is Thumbkin? Where is Thumbkin?
Here I am, (bring out one hand with thumb up)
Here I am. (repeat with other hand)
How are you today, sir? (move one thumb as if talkin
Very well, I thank you. (move other thumb as if talkin)
Run away, (move one hand behind back)
Run away, (move other hand behind back)
Repeat with each finger.
Pointer finger – where is pointer?
Middle finger – where is tall man?
Ring finger – where is ring man?
Pinkle – where is pinkle?

**Good Morning Song**
Good Morning, Good Morning
Good Morning to you.
I’m Happy to see you,
And how do you do?
True or False

Children benefit from parents and caregivers reading to them starting at 6 months. **TRUE**

Recent survey found 45% parents say the benefits of reading start at 2 years of age or older.

Children start benefiting from their parents talking to them at 3 months. **FALSE**

Benefits begin at birth! Recent survey found 63% parents say the benefits start at 3 months.
What do babies think?

http://www.ted.com/talks/patricia_kuhl_the_linguistic_genius_of_babies
Take Aways of “Linguistic Genius of Babies”

- **Early language learning** is critically dependent on **social interactions**, and on the quality of speech that children hear (Kuhl, Tsao, & Liu, 2003)

- Young babies learn best **through frequent, high-quality social interactions** with native speakers

- Rate of children’s vocabulary development influenced by the quality of the speech they are exposed to

- **Bilingual babies**
  - Language growth related to the quality and quantity of speech heard in each language
  - **Amount of infant-directed speech** heard in one-on-on interactions in a language positively related to growth of that language (Ramírez-Esparza et al., 2016)
Communicating with Babies

- Acknowledge each baby by name
- Wait for the baby’s response
- Talk directly to each baby about what is happening
- Talk to babies before touching them
- Refrain from talking about babies to others in the baby’s presence

What about “Baby Signing”?  

- Impact of baby signs on language skills at age 2  
  - Difficult to tell difference between language skills of children who had and had not been taught

- Helps in promoting other aspects of communication and development  
  - Assist child express needs and wants  
  - May increases one-one interactions with caregivers  
  - Preventing the terrible two’s

- Caregivers’ sensitivity is important for supporting the use of common and symbolic gestures (Vallotton et al., 2017)
Listen and Tell a Story

10 minutes
Strategies and Activities to Increase Oral Language Development
Purposeful and Intentional in Our Everyday Practices
• **Kind of conversation** between child and adult makes biggest difference for language and literacy development

• What makes for a **quality** conversation?
  – Adult follows child’s lead, what interests the child
  – Child and adult take back and forth turns
    • Real conversations are interesting to children and have 3-4 turns or exchanges between child and adult (Roskos, Tabors, & Lenhart, 2004)
  – Child and adult enjoy the time together
  – Story telling (who, what, where, when, and how), sequencing of events

The Hanen Centre (2016)
• Expand the message
  - Child: “Eat now!”
  - Adult: “Yes, let’s eat some bananas.”

- Add New Words
  - Child: “House is so big.”
  - Adult: “Yes, that house is gigantic.”

- Storytelling is a part of the day
  - Adult: What happened the last time we were at the museum?
Intentionally Using Activities and Experiences in Our Everyday “Routines” to Optimize Children’s Learning
• What **opportunities** exist during the day engage in **quality conversations** with children throughout the day?

• What makes it **challenging to have quality conversations**?
**Hearing Words in Meaningful Contexts**

- **Any activity is an opportunity** for language learning
  - Conversations in the car, at dinner, while playing
  - Talk the foods you both like to eat while preparing snacks
  - Introduce new words during a doctor’s visit

- **Children learn to communicate** in their everyday interactions with their parents and caregivers.

- Be a **responsive** communication partner
  - Follow the child’s lead, don’t take over the conversation

- **Vocabulary and grammar are important**
  - Complete sentences, “I’m brushing my teeth” rather than “Mommy brush teeth”
Your **interest, questions, and comments** as you play alongside children helps grow a child’s oral language, social-emotional development and critical thinking.

Example: Playing doctor*

- **Describe things**: (matching, identifying labeling, *show me a bandage*)

- **Describe and Analyze**: (what is seen, heard, touched, *I’m going to use the stethoscope to listen to my heart*)

- **Retelling**: (sequencing, predicting, excluding, *What is the doctor going to do after taking my temperature?*)

- **Beyond the here and now**: (cause and effect, problem-solving, imagining, *what happens if the doctor is sick?*)

*Hill, S. 2010, Oral language and play*
Older Children: Drama Center

- Small group activity, opportunity to
  - Negotiate roles to complete a task successfully
  - Learn to ask for and give help
  - Share speaking time and take turns
  - Listen to each other
  - Empathy, consider each other’s feelings

(Trehearne, M. 2006).
Mealtimes as an opportunity to connect and communicate

- Facilitates language and literacy skills

- Children get older, talk about non-immediate events (not what is happening at mealtime)
  - What did they do today?
  - What are they going to do this weekend?
  - Model active listening skills and paraphrase the child and expand on their thoughts asking open-ended questions.
  - Model correct language use without correcting the child directly
    - child says, “I thee the thehose”, caregiver says, “Yes, you did see the seahorse.”
Do the crackers taste good?

What are you going to do outside this afternoon?

Did you have fun painting this morning?

Are you eating bananas?

I saw you playing with blocks this morning. What were you working on?
• Supports young children’s learning and development differently than stories read aloud from picture books.

• Children are given the opportunity to:
  – use their imagination
  – communicate effectively
  – enhance their social literacy (e.g., problem-solving)
  – physical experience (kinesthetic learning supports understanding of the story, connect with the story more personally)
Movement and Oral Language

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BvZJhQ3MBy8
Movements and Oral Language

- Incorporates visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning
- Helps to relax children when learning
- Link of physical and speech-language skills (Murata, 2004)
  - Phonemic awareness, rhyming
- Improves attention and language organization
- Movement may help with auditory processing of information (Mauer, 1999)
- Speech and Yoga linked by breath (Sumar, 2000)
- Receptive and Expressive Language
  - Once upon a time there was a name “TREE” to tree pose

http://www.sayitright.org/yoga-learning.html
• Creating scenarios for different characters can:
  – Increase children’s vocabularies and storytelling skills
    • Brown Bear, Brown Bear with popsicle “puppets”
  – Be a safe place for children to express challenging feelings.
  – It’s FUN!
• Want a young child to help or be a helper?
• Children’s helping behaviors
  – 3-6 year olds tested whether referring to helping with a noun (vs. a verb) would affect children’s helping behavior
    • See if noun wording related to prosocial behavior in children
    • Children significantly helped more in the noun condition, “helper” (29% more)

Bryan, Master, & Walton, 2014.
EXPERIMENT 1

Participants and Procedures

- Baseline
- "Help"
- "Helper"

Bar chart showing the comparison of baseline, "Help", and "Helper" in different categories:

- Blocks
- Bin
- Toys
- Crayons
EXPERIMENT 2

Participants and Procedures

- **Blocks**
  - "Help" Category
  - "Helper" Category

- **Bin**
  - "Help" Category
  - "Helper" Category

- **Toys**
  - "Help" Category
  - "Helper" Category

- **Crayons**
  - "Help" Category
  - "Helper" Category
What does that mean for Teachers and Parents?

• Being a helper invokes identity, in this case positive identity, not just behavior

• Where do we do it?

• How do we do it?
How Do We Increase the Oral Language of Children with Books and Reading?
Selecting Books and Sharing them with Children

• Include a **variety of texts**

• Recommended to use **colorful, realistic photos** for child under **24 months**

• Some children **may be distracted** by the “bells and whistles: pop-ups, tabs, and electronic games”
  – Takes away from the conversation and understanding the story
    • BUT may help child with language impairment

• More important to **be responsive to** child when reading

• **Repeated readings** reinforce the language in the texts
  – Older children (3 years & older), three readings related to more rich retellings, application of what is read

Simcock, & DeLoache (2006); de Jong & Bus (2002)
Sharing Books with Toddlers

- **18-2.5 years**
  - Enjoy holding a book, turning the pages, looking at pictures and talking about what they find interesting
  - Love to read their favorite books, again, and again, and again!

- **Goals of reading**
  - Child develop interest in books
  - Opportunity for child to interact with you
  - Learn new words
  - HAVE FUN!

- **Choosing Books**
  - Books that are colorful, realistic photos
  - Board Books
  - Repetitive Books
    - Goodnight Moon
  - Photo Albums
  - Short, simple
  - Homemade “make a book”
  - Avoid lengthy complicated stories, fairytales
Read Aloud Demonstration for Infant and Toddlers
Sharing Books with Preschoolers

- **2.5-5 years**
  - Enjoy holding a book, turning the pages, looking at pictures and talking about what they find interesting
  - Love to read their favorite books, again, and again, and again!

- **Goals of reading**
  - Encourage child’s interest in books and wanting to share them with you
  - Learning new words, ideas and concepts
  - Understanding stories, increase imagination
  - HAVE FUN!

- **Choosing Books**
  - Repetitive Books (younger preschooler)
    - Goodnight Moon
  - Non-Fiction about interesting topics such as animals, occupations
  - Simple stories main event, beginning, middle, end.
  - Homemade “make a book”
Follow the CAR
2-5 year olds

- **Comment** on what the child is looking at, touching, or talking about and **WAIT FIVE SECONDS**

- **Ask** questions about what the child is looking at, touching or talking about in a book and **WAIT FIVE SECONDS**

- **Respond** by adding a little more to the child’s response

Using Books as an Opportunity to Expand Knowledge and Vocabulary
Tier 3: Precision Vocabulary
Uncommon words that are typically associated with a specific domain (isotope, grounded-theory)

Tier 2: Descriptive Vocabulary
Words that appear frequently in texts and for which students already have conceptual understanding (adapt, fortunate)

Tier 1: Basic and General Vocabulary
Basic words that most children know before entering school (happy, clock, baby)

I really have to try **hard** while climbing this **big** mountain!

I really have to be **persistent** while climbing this **enormous** mountain!

(Beck, McKeown, Kucan, 2002)
**Tier Two Words** ...(fairly general but sophisticated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier Two Words</th>
<th>Tier One Words</th>
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<tr>
<td>mention</td>
<td>tell</td>
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<tr>
<td>occurrence</td>
<td>Something happened</td>
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<td>tend</td>
<td>take care of</td>
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<tr>
<td>haunting</td>
<td>scary</td>
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<tr>
<td>fortune</td>
<td>luck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sinister</td>
<td>scary</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Picture Books can provide **Opportunities to add language**, not every day words

A way for children to learn sophisticated words
- Weather man “meteorologists”
- Words in picture books

Get in groups of 4

Choose a children’s book

Read the book in the group, identifying ways to use tier 2 words...BE CREATIVE!
Shared Reading Prompts

• **Completion prompts** are typically used in books with rhyme or repetitive phrases.
  – Example: “Chicka chicka boom boom. Will there be enough _____”
• **Recall prompts** ask children to recall what has already occurred in the story.
  – Example: “Remember when we read *Toot and Puddle*? Who were they?”
• **Open-ended prompts** ask children to focus on the illustrations in the book.
  – Example: “What is happening on this page?”
• **Wh- prompts** (what, where, when, why, and how) help children to learn new vocabulary.
  – Example: “What is that?”
• **Distancing prompts** require children to relate book content to experiences in their own lives.
  – Example: “I think Sophie was really angry. When do you feel angry?”
Media Use During Early Childhood: Does it promote oral language development?
90% of children under the age of 2 years watch electronic media.

1-2 hours of television watched each day by children under the age of 2 years.

1/3 of children have a television in their room by age 3.

39% of young children say that TV is on for at least 6 hours in the home.

75% of top selling infant videos.
• Children younger than 2 years, **adult interaction with the child during media use is crucial!**

Avoid digital media use (except video-chatting) children younger than 18 to 24 months

2 to 5 years, limit screen use to **1 hour per day** with high quality programming

No screens 1 hour before bedtime

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Media and Young Minds, COUNCIL ON COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA
Pediatrics Nov 2016, 138 (5) e20162591; DOI: 10.1542/peds.2016-2591
Some Assumptions Not Supported by Research

• If content is educational, it’s okay for my children
  – Not all shows claiming to educational foster learning in children
• The TV being on in the background does not affect children
  – Decreases time spent interacting with children and impacts the quality of interactions
  – Interferes with children’s play even if they aren’t “watching” the TV
• All media for children under age 2 is damaging
  – Look at the Three C’s- content, context, and the individual child
  – Interactions, talk about what is on the screen
• Young children are not impacted by scary programs
  – (the evening news, PG-rated movies with aggressive scenes)
  – Watching violent media in the presence of young children related to more sleep problems during nap and bedtime

Guernsey, L. How true are your assumptions about screen time. NAEYC
Regardless of the technology you and your child are using together, **be an active participant, a “media mentor”**
- Some children with this mentoring do learn more words and gain more knowledge

**Remember the Three C’s**: content, context, and the individual child

**Recommended ones by Reading Rockets (Free)**
- ABCmouse.com (Pre-K-K), learning phonics, spelling
- Learn with Homer (PreK-K), Comprehension, phonics
Language Rich Opportunities in Every Day Events

• Reflect and Make a Plan

- Get into groups of 4
- Identify 2 ways you are already using every day events to promote oral language development in young children
- Identify 2 ways you PLAN to use every day events to promote oral language development in young children
- Write these ideas down on a piece of paper
- Share these ideas with your group
Take Home Messages
Children need **high quality experiences in relationships that are connected and safe** for oral language to serve as foundational for learning and thinking

- Parent/caregiver sensitivity and responsiveness
- Quantity or frequency exposure and experiences
- High quality conversations and contexts

**Skills beget skills**, simpler skills support later developing skills

Specifically, children need **exposure to books, language-rich play, and quality conversations** (singing, rhyming, books)

**Parent’s (caregivers) words have the power to “build their child’s brain”**

Both the **home and school environment** play important roles in language and development.
Selected References

- Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. “Experiences Build Brain Architecture” and “Serve and Return Interaction Shapes Brain Circuitry” videos, two parts in the three-part series, “Three Core Concepts in Early Development.”
  http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/multimedia/videos