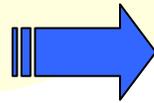


Creating Language-rich Environments



A Facilitators' guide of workshop activities to support parents of children birth to five years



This resource is intended for service providers and agency or school staff who work with young children (birth to five years) and their families.



A PDF version of this resource is available on the Alberta Children's Services Web site at <http://www.parentlinkalberta.ca/publish/920.htm>

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Workshop activities to support parents in creating language-rich environments for children birth to five years

Notes to Facilitator	
This section includes workshop objectives and considerations for planning.	Pages 3–6
A. Introductory activities (if needed, choose one of the following)	Approx. time/page
A1. Name Cards	10 to 20 minutes
Participants introduce themselves to the group by making a name tag that shares information about their children.	Pages 7–8
A2. Match Up!	10 to 20 minutes
Participants use playing cards to find partners to discuss questions they hope to have answered during the workshop.	Pages 9–12
B. Information-sharing activity (recommended)	Approx. time/page
B1. Snapshots	20 to 30 minutes
Participants review how young children communicate at different ages and share examples of how their own children are learning language.	Pages 13–22
C. Application of strategies activities (choose one or more of the following)	Approx. time/page
C1. Talking about Toys	20 to 30 minutes
Participants explore and apply strategies for creating language-rich opportunities through playing with everyday toys.	Pages 23–32
C2. Making the Most of Everyday Activities	20 to 30 minutes
Participants explore strategies for turning everyday activities into opportunities for developing language.	Pages 33–38
C3. Community Connections	20 to 30 minutes
Participants identify community opportunities and apply strategies for language development.	Pages 39–42

Creating language-rich environments for children birth to five years

D. Exploration activities (choose one or more of the following)		Approx. time/page
D1. Beginning with Books		20 to 30 minutes
Participants learn how to use books to create language-rich opportunities for their children.		Pages 43–48
D2. Singing to Speak		20 to 30 minutes
Participants use familiar tunes to make up special songs to sing with their children.		Pages 49–52
D3. Crafts and Conversations		20 to 30 minutes
Participants make bubbles and explore how doing simple crafts together can inspire language play.		Pages 53–56
D4. Games Galore		20 to 30 minutes
Participants explore and apply strategies for creating language-rich opportunities through playing games.		Pages 57–62
E. Wrap-up activities (choose one of the following)		Approx. time/page
E1. Where Do I Go From Here?		10 to 20 minutes
Participants summarize what they've learned in the workshop and reflect on the importance of their role in creating language-rich environments for their children.		Pages 63–66
E2. Remember When?		10 to 20 minutes
Participants use personal memories to reflect on the importance of their role in creating language-rich environments for their children.		Pages 67–69

Creating language-rich environments for children birth to five years

Notes to Facilitator

Introduction

These workshop activities provide a framework for parents of children birth to five years to explore strategies for creating language-rich environments. The activities create hands-on opportunities for discussion, exploration and application of strategies.

This workshop is designed to be presented to parents of children birth to five years. With modifications, it can also be presented to other adults who work with young children such as early childhood service providers. (Please note: Although workshop participants may vary, for ease of communication, the terms *parents* and *participants* will be used interchangeably throughout this guide.) Workshop facilitators may include service providers or agency or school staff who work with young children and their families.

This workshop will provide participants with the opportunity to:

- learn basic information about the language development of children ages birth through five years
- learn key strategies that enhance language skills during everyday activities
- identify and discuss everyday situations and activities that are opportunities to use these strategies.

Why is speech and language development important?

Speech and language development is important because it allows infants, toddlers and young children to communicate effectively and with confidence in all of their environments. It enables and enhances their social, emotional, cognitive (thinking skills) and academic development within the context of the home and the community.

What is a language-rich environment?

Language-rich environments include the home and the places families visit. The people children spend time with, and the activities they do, contribute to language-rich environments. To make experiences language-rich, parents create opportunities for talking and listening with their children. The activity could be anything—the key is *how* it's done. Language-rich activities rely on adults nurturing and responding positively to children's communication.

How do parents create language-rich environments?

Parents play an important role in their children's speech and language development. Children learn language everyday. Parents provide their children with a variety of opportunities to communicate at home and in the community. Parents help children learn language by talking about what their children are doing, touching, tasting, seeing and hearing. They help by playing and doing everyday activities together. If parents speak a language other than English, they can do all of these activities in the language of the home.

Considerations for planning

Presentation content and length

This workshop offers basic information about speech and language development, activities to do, and tips and strategies for facilitators. Presenting all of the workshop activities could take four to five hours, depending on the discussion that takes place.

This workshop can be presented a number of ways, including:

- one long workshop with some or all of the activities
- one short workshop with a few targeted activities
- a series of short workshops with a focus on different topics each time, such as toys in one and books in another
- a series of short workshops organized around ages of children.

These workshop activities are designed to be flexible. Depending on the needs of the participants and the time available, as much or as little information as necessary can be presented. If the workshop is less than one hour, facilitators may choose to share some information about development, followed by one of the activities. If the workshop is two to three hours, facilitators may want to include more information about development and three or four of the activities.

The ages of the children of the workshop participants may also influence the selection of activities and how much information is covered. If the participants have children that cover a wide age range, then facilitators may choose to share more of the developmental information and do a variety of activities for a range of ages.

Know your audience

It is helpful to have a clear idea of who the workshop participants will be. Workshop activities are organized under five headings:

- Introductory activities
- Information-sharing activity
- Application of strategies activities
- Exploration activities
- Wrap-up activities.

Depending on the needs of the group, facilitators may choose activities from each of these categories. A sample planning sheet is on page 6.

The number of participants will affect how the workshop is organized. If there is a small number of participants, then a whole group discussion might work well. If there is a larger number, then it may be better to organize participants into smaller groups of two to four people for discussions.

It is also important to consider childcare. Think about the following type of questions:

- Will parents come by themselves or bring their children?

Notes to Facilitator

- Is there someone to supervise the children during the presentation or will the children be with their parents?
- Is there a separate room for the presentation or will the children and parents be in different parts of the same room?
- Can some workshop activities be done with parents and children?

The cultural differences and language needs of individual participants also need to be considered. Think about the activities and whether they will be relevant and accessible for participants with varying backgrounds. Some activities may need to be adapted. If there are participants whose first language is not English, facilitators may need to consider the services of an interpreter or see if another participant can translate the information. When one or more non-native English speakers are participating in the workshop, it may be helpful to limit the amount of information presented at one time, use more examples and check for understanding throughout the workshops. Through the activities, tips for working with families who speak languages other than English are included in the *Facilitator Tips*.

Workshop components

Each activity description contains the following components:

- time needed (most activities run 20 to 30 minutes)
- purpose (a one-sentence summary)
- grouping (including whole group, small groups, partners, individuals)
- materials needed
- introduction (a sample introductory statement facilitators might adapt)
- process (step-by-step instructions for the activity)
- facilitator tips (ideas for grouping, further discussion or extending activities)
- for additional information (if participants have concerns about their child's language development)
- take home (ideas for encouraging participants to take key ideas home and try them out over the next week).

Most activities include a *Participant Handout* to organize and record ideas. Several activities have a second *Participant Handout* that can be used as a take-home to reinforce new ideas explored through the workshop activity. Four of the activities also have *Facilitator Backgrounders*. These completed samples provide additional information for the workshop facilitator.

For more information

Sometimes, a participant may ask a question about speech and language development, and the answer is not within the workshop information. Depending on the question, it may be necessary to refer the person to a speech-language pathologist.

To find a speech-language pathologist in your area, call Health Link Alberta at:

Provincial toll-free: 1-866-408-LINK (5465)

Calgary area: 403-943-LINK (5465)

<http://www.healthlinkalberta.ca>

Edmonton area: 780-408-LINK (5465)

Workshop Planner

Facilitator _____

Group/Agency _____

Number of participants _____ Location _____

Workshop duration _____ Date _____

Number of sessions _____ Time _____

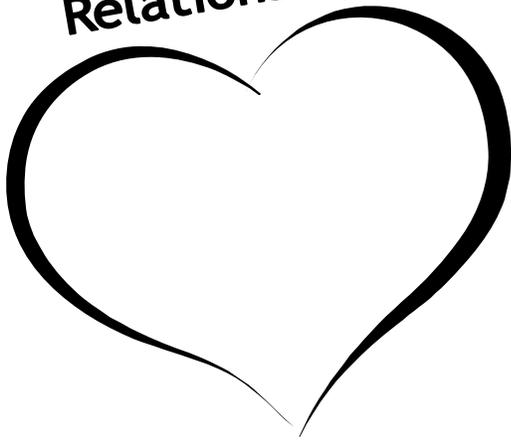
	Approx. time
A. Introductory activity	
<input type="checkbox"/> Not needed	
<i>or</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> A1: Name Cards	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 40px;"></div>
<i>or</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> A2: Match Up!	
B. Information-sharing activity (recommended)	
<input type="checkbox"/> B1: Snapshots	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 40px;"></div>
C. Application of strategies activities	
<input type="checkbox"/> C1: Talking about Toys	
<i>and/or</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> C2: Making the Most of Everyday Activities	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 40px;"></div>
<i>and/or</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> C3: Community Connections	
D. Exploration activities	
<input type="checkbox"/> D1: Beginning with Books	
<i>and/or</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> D2: Singing to Speak	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 40px;"></div>
<i>and/or</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> D3: Crafts and Conversations	
<i>and/or</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> D4: Games Galore	
E. Wrap-up activity	
<input type="checkbox"/> E1: Where Do I Go From Here?	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 40px;"></div>
<i>or</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> E2: Remember When?	
Total time	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 40px;"></div>

Creating language-rich environments for children birth to five years

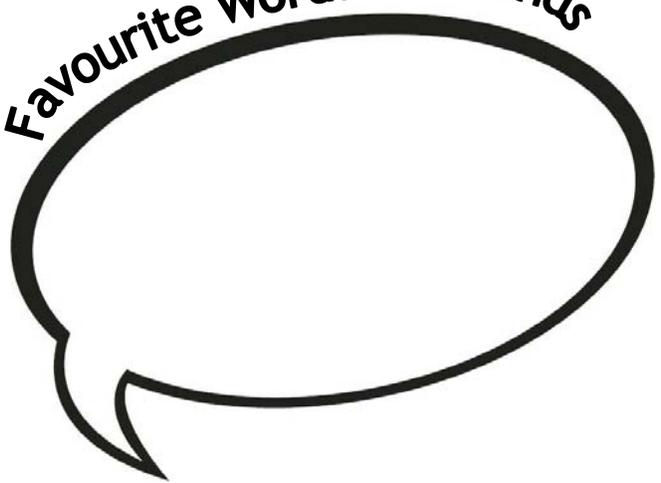
Introductory Activity #A1 Name Cards

Time	10 to 20 minutes
Purpose	To have participants introduce themselves and share the names and ages of their children
Grouping	individual, whole group
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• markers• blank paper or copies of template for name card• large sketch of sample name tag on chart paper (if using blank paper)
Introduction	“We’re going to take the first five minutes of the workshop to make name cards to introduce ourselves to the group.”
Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Distribute paper (or template) and markers.2. Use the template or an enlarged version on chart paper to quickly walk through the parts of the name tag. For example,<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Since this workshop is all about your children, please write your children’s names in the centre of the card, with their ages below.• Next, write your name in the top left hand corner and your title, as in ‘mother of ..., father of ...’• Next, write some of your children’s favourite words or sounds in the top right hand corner of the name card.• In the bottom left hand corner, write the name of one of your children’s favourite stories.• In the opposite corner, write the name of one of their favourite songs.”3. Give participants about five minutes to complete their name cards.4. Ask participants to use the name card to introduce themselves to the group.
Facilitator tips	After participants have introduced themselves, post the name cards on the wall, arranged by age of child. This way, you can personalize the workshop by referring to the participants’ children by name and age throughout the activities.

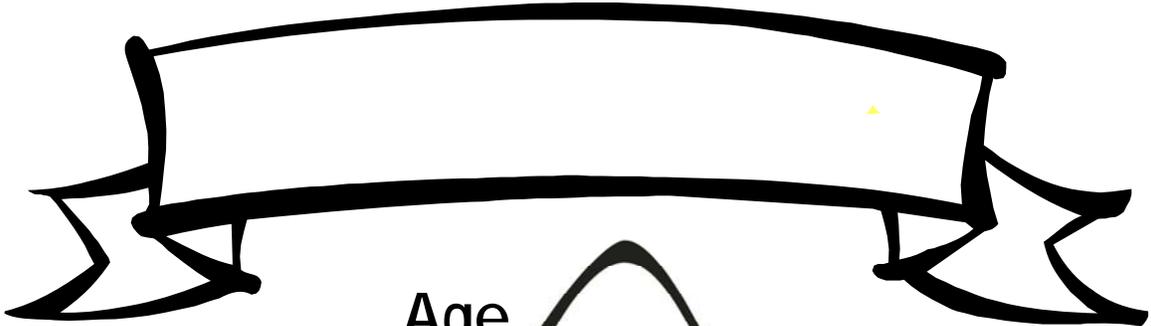
Relationship



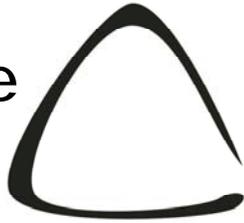
Favourite Words or Sounds



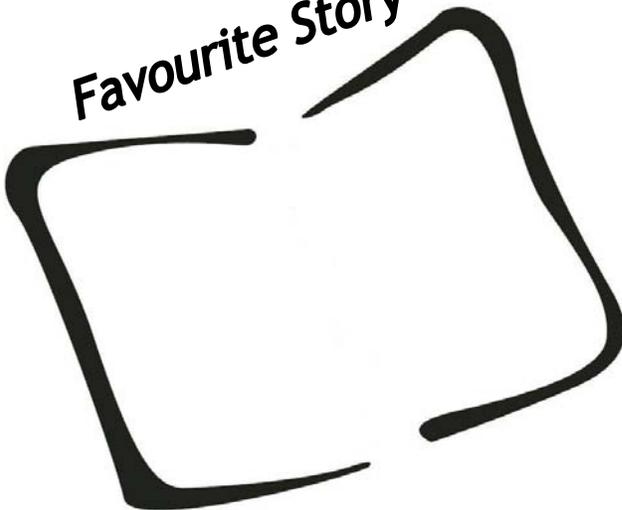
Child's Name



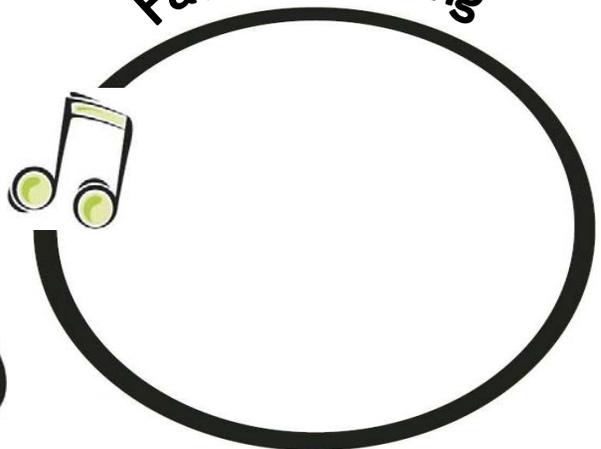
Age



Favourite Story



Favourite Song



Creating language-rich environments for children birth to five years

Introductory Activity #A2 Match Up!

Time	10 to 20 minutes
Purpose	To have participants informally introduce themselves and begin discussing language-rich environments.
Grouping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• less than 13 people – 4 cards each• 14–39 people – 3 cards each• more than 40 people – 2 cards each
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• deck of playing cards (stack each suit separately ♦ ♥ ♣ ♠)• copies of participant handout <i>Match Up! Discussion Guide</i>• chart paper and marker
Introduction	<p>As people arrive, ask them to pick up one card from each suit, and hold onto them.</p> <p>After welcoming participants, introduce the Match Up! activity. “You are probably wondering what the cards are for.” Ask them what card games they played as a child. Start off the discussion with familiar card games such as Crazy Eights, War, Go Fish or Crib. If participants did not play cards, invite them to talk about the kinds of games they did play.</p> <p>Discuss the learning opportunities games provide for children such as learning about turn taking, numbers, colours and how to ask questions.</p>
Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Distribute the participant handout <i>Match Up! Discussion Guide</i> and review the guidelines.2. Participants stack their four cards, one on top of the other. Participants find another person who has the same suit they are holding on the top of their stack.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When they find that person, they share their thoughts on the corresponding question from the discussion guide. They may also record their ideas on the discussion guide.• When both people have answered the question, they move to the second card in their stack (e.g., ♣). Participants should try to find a different person for each card.• Note: The number of cards each person takes and the questions they answer depends upon the number of people attending the workshop (see notes for “Grouping” above).

- 
3. Conclude the activity by inviting participants to share what they hope to learn in the workshop. Record ideas and questions on chart paper and post for the duration of the workshop.
 4. Thank everyone for sharing their ideas. Encourage participants to share their ideas and questions throughout the workshop.

Introductory Activity #A2: Match Up!

Participant Handout

Match Up! Discussion Guide

Directions:

1. Find a person who has the same suit you have (♣ ♥ ♠ ♦) on your top card.
2. Find the suit and the related discussion question on the list below.
3. Discuss your thoughts about the question.
4. Allow a few minutes for discussion, then move on to the next card in your stack.
5. Match up with a different person and discuss the next question until you have matched up all of your cards and answered the questions with different people.

	Discussion questions
♣	What do you hope to learn today?
♥	What's one way that you have been helping your child's language development at home?
♠	What's an activity that you and your child like to do together?
♦	What's your child's favourite thing to play with? Why?

Creating language-rich environments for children birth to five years

Information-sharing Activity #B1 Snapshots

Time	20 to 30 minutes
Purpose	To provide parents with a ‘snapshot’ of how children communicate at different ages and to create an opportunity for them to reflect on how their own children are communicating.
Grouping	small groups (organized by ages of children)
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• copies of participant handout <i>Snapshots: How Children Communicate</i>• pens• six signs posted around the room with following ages identified:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– birth to 12 months– 1 year old– 2 years old– 3 years old– 4 years old– 5 years old• copies of <i>Talking and Listening Checklist</i> from <i>Talk Box</i> (can be directly downloaded from http://www.parentlinkalberta.ca/publish/docs/03_-_Talking_and_Listening_Checklist.pdf)
Introduction	“This activity will look at how children communicate at different ages. It is important to know how your children communicate and what you can expect as they get older. Knowing this will help you make the most of opportunities to support and enhance your children’s language learning.”
Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ask participants to find the posted sign around the room that corresponds to the age of their child.2. Working in small groups corresponding to the age of their children, participants read and discuss the <i>Snapshots</i> handout description of how children of that age communicate.3. Participants then use the questions in the right hand column to think about how their own child communicates. Provide time for discussion and to record examples.4. Starting with the birth-to-12-months group, ask each small group to share two or three examples of how their children are communicating.

Facilitator tips

- If participants have more than one child, ask them to focus on the age group of one child and work with that small group.
- If there is only one participant in an age group, have that participant join another group and combine the two ages.
- Groups may choose to have one person read aloud the snapshot, or individuals may prefer to read the material on their own and then discuss the information as a group.
- As groups share their examples, look for opportunities to point out how language development varies from child to child.

For additional information

If participants have concerns about their children's language development, encourage them to contact a speech-language pathologist in their area.

Take home

Let participants know they will be receiving a *Talking and Listening Checklist* at the end of the session. The checklist will also include the Web address for the *Talk Box* site (www.parentlinkalberta.ca/publish/920.htm), where they will find more detailed information on age-specific speech and language development.

Participant Handout

Snapshots: How Children Communicate



***Do babies talk? Maybe not,
but they tell you so much!***

- Babies may not say their first words until about a year, but they have lots to tell you.
- Parents learn early how to tell what their baby wants or needs. When they are quiet and alert, babies are telling you they are happy and it's a good time to play.
- **At 1 month old**, babies generally begin to smile! They get excited when they like what you are doing.
- Babies this age let you know when they don't like something. They cry when they are hungry, tired, hurt or need to be changed.
- **By 3 months**, babies start making those cooing and gooing sounds.
- Next, they make blowing sounds with their lips (sometimes called raspberries).
- **Around 6–8 months**, they start to babble their first sounds, like “bababa” or “mamama.” This sound play is very important in learning to talk. Before you know it, they are saying their first word. You may also notice that they use gestures and noises to get your attention and ask for things.
- Babies are born with the ability to hear. They recognize and are calmed by your voice. As they grow, they start to recognize words for people and common objects. They understand new words everyday.

Think about your baby ...

1. What kinds of sounds does your baby make?

2. How does your baby get your attention?

3. What words does your baby seem to understand?



Your 5-year-old is your mini-me!

- By five years of age, you will notice that your children sound like a miniature version of you. They have learned basic sentences and say most speech sounds.
- They will still make some mistakes when talking—that's okay! They have lots to learn, like some speech sounds, new words and more complex sentences.

Think about your 5-year-old ...

1. What is something your 5-year-old said that sounded just like something you might say?

2. Give an example of the type of mistake that your 5-year-old might make in saying or using new words.

3. What did your 5-year-old say this week that really surprised you?

Talking and Listening



Talk Box

Your child learns about talking and listening by being with you and other people. She learns the words in your language, how to put words together, how to have conversations, and how to play with others. She also learns how to follow directions and understand questions. Your child learns about talking and listening right from the day she is born. This learning continues until she is an adult.

Check off all of the things your child is doing.



What to Expect

Under 12 months...

- By 3 months** your baby startles to sudden, loud noises.
- Your baby seems to know your voice.
- Your baby seems to comfort to your voice when she is upset and crying.
- Your baby coos, grunts, gurgles, cries, and makes sounds like "ahh".
- By 6 months** your baby turns toward a sound.
- Your baby is interested in sounds, voices, and music.
- Your baby smiles when you smile.
- Your baby's babbles sound like "mama" and "gaga".

Your 1 year old...

- Turns and looks in the direction of sounds.
- Responds to familiar sounds like a dog barking or when you call her name.
- Recognizes words for everyday objects like *cup*, *shoe*, and *car*.
- Copies actions and sounds that you make.
- Communicates by crying, laughing, looking, showing, reaching, grunting, and making sounds.
- Babbles a variety of sounds and says her first words.
- By 1½ years** understands and says at least 10 words.
- Points to people and body parts like *eyes* or *nose*.
- Points to pictures in a book.

- Starts to pretend – going to sleep, talking on the phone, and so on.

Your 2 year old...

- Uses 2 words together, like *more milk* and *Mommy eat*.
- Says at least 50 words.
- Starts to use *ing* (*eating*), plurals (*boats*), and possessives (*baby's bottle*).
- Understands 2-part sentences, like *Get your ball and put it in the box*.
- By 2½ years** uses words that name objects (*ball*, *shoe*), describe (*big*, *hot*), and talk about actions (*kick*, *eat*).
- Points to more body parts and clothes and points to many pictures in a book.
- Uses common objects in pretend play. For example, he pretends to fill up a toy car with gas and drive away.
- Says more words every week.



For information about speech development, ask for the *Speech Sounds Checklist*.

Your 3 year old...

- Says 3 to 4 words together, like *I want more juice* and *Mommy is at work*.
- Uses more of the little words like *is, a, the*.
- Follows 3-part directions, like *Go to your room, get your socks, and bring them to me*.
- Understands and asks questions, like *Where is your coat?, Who's that?* and *What is soap for?*
- Describes activities, feelings and problems, and tells simple stories.

Your 4 year old...

- Uses sentences that are longer and more complete, such as "I want to go out and play on the swing."
- Uses more grammar, like pronouns (*I, you, me, she, he, we*), past tense (*walked*), and some question words (*what, who, where, why*). There are still some errors.

- Understands most concept words like *colours, shapes, locations, texture, time*.

Your 5 year old...

- Uses sentences that can be more than 5 to 6 words long.
- Asks more difficult questions, like *why* and *how*.
- Understands most questions and adult conversation.
- Uses the present, future, and past tenses, like *walks, walked, and will walk*.
- Retells a story by naming the characters and by talking about what happened.

When to get help

You should get help if...

- Your child is frustrated or difficult to understand.
- You did not check off all of the things listed for your child's age.

Where to get help

Are you concerned about your child's speech and language development?

Speech-language pathologists can help.

To find one in your area...

- Contact your local health unit
- Call Health Link Alberta at:
 - Calgary Area 403-943-LINK (5465)
 - Edmonton Area 780-408-LINK (5465)
 - Toll Free 1-866-408-LINK (5465)
- Go to www.healthlinkalberta.ca



Go to www.parentlinkalberta.ca for more Talk Box ideas.

Creating language-rich environments for children birth to five years

Application of Strategies Activity #C1 Talking about Toys

Time	20 to 30 minutes
Purpose	To introduce and explore language-enrichment strategies parents can use with their children when playing with everyday toys.
Grouping	whole group, small groups of three or four
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• copies of participant handout <i>Strategies for Communicating with Young Children</i>• four toys or toy picture cards per small group• pens
Introduction	“When your children are playing with toys, it’s a perfect time to explore language. Let’s talk about some specific strategies you can use for promoting language when your children are playing with their favourite toys at home.”
Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Distribute participant handout <i>Strategies for Communicating with Young Children</i>. (Refer to <i>Facilitator Backgrounder</i> on pages 25–28 for a rationale for each type of strategy.)2. Introduce the strategies by reviewing the handout information. Using a toy ball, demonstrate one strategy for each age group. Example for baby: “One strategy is to copy your child’s sounds or actions. If your baby pats the ball, <u>you</u> can pat the ball.” Example for toddler: “For your toddler, you might try to use short and simple sentences. For example, if your child says, ‘ball,’ you could say, ‘big ball.’” Example for preschooler: “A strategy you might try with your preschooler is repeating what your child says using the correct words or pronunciation. For example, if your child says, ‘Me bounce the ball,’ you could say, ‘<u>I</u> like to bounce the ball, too.’” Example for kindergarteners: “One strategy to use with your kindergartener is playing with sounds. You can talk about all the words that rhyme with ‘ball,’ like fall, hall, mall, call, tall.”

3. Organize participants into small groups of three or four people.
4. Provide each group with four toys (or toy picture cards). Give them ten minutes to try out the sample language strategies for their children's ages with one or more of the toys (or toy cards).
5. Ask each group to choose one of the toys (or toy cards) and share one or two examples of how to use a sample language-development strategy while playing with that toy.

Facilitator tips

- Sample toys could include typical playthings that young children enjoy such as blocks, sorters, stacking cups, plastic tea sets, wheeled toys, stuffed animals, puppets, wooden puzzles, etc.
- Remind parents many everyday objects such as plastic containers, pots or towels can become toys for young children. Consider using everyday objects for this workshop activity in place of actual toys or toy cards.
- *For families who speak more than one language at home:*
Take opportunities to talk about toys in your family's first language. Special toys can also communicate important aspects of a family's heritage and cultural traditions.

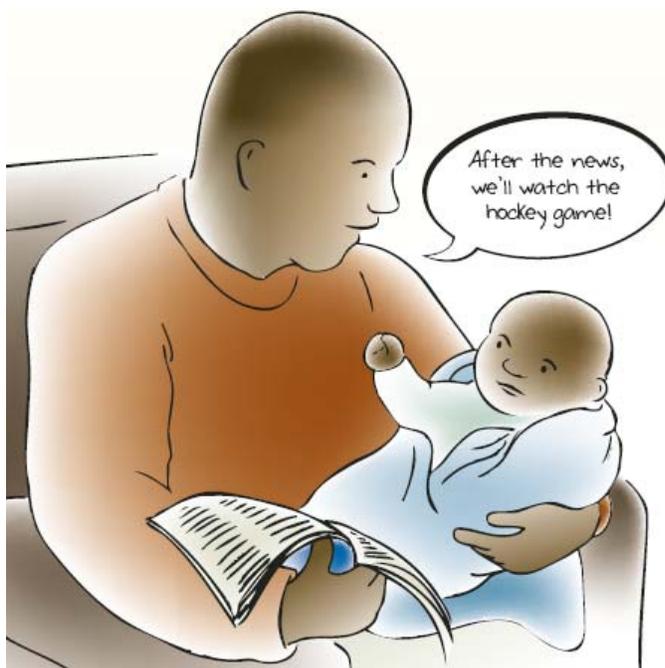
For additional information

If participants have concerns about their children's language development, encourage them to contact a speech-language pathologist in their area.

Take home

Encourage participants to think about two or three of their children's favourite toys and how they can use them to create language-rich opportunities over the next week.

Strategies for communicating with babies	Why these strategies are important
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait and watch for your baby to communicate. This could be with an action, a sound or a word. 	<p>Waiting and watching helps parents tune in to their babies. Babies know what they say or do is important when their parents pay attention to them by waiting and watching for them to communicate.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy your baby's sounds and actions. When you imitate your baby, he or she will likely make the same sound or action again. This becomes a fun turn-taking game. 	<p>When parents copy their babies, they show them that they are interested in what they are doing. Copying babies' sounds and actions will encourage babies to copy what parents do and say. This builds the foundation for future turn taking and conversations.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to your baby about anything. Talk about your day, what you are doing and what you see. Use lots of expression in your voice. 	<p>Any time parents put their thoughts and actions into words, they are teaching their babies language. It doesn't matter what they talk about. The most important thing is to provide babies with opportunities to learn language by listening to parents talk.</p>



Strategies for communicating with toddlers	Why these strategies are important
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let your toddler be the leader. Join in and play with your toddler. Play with the toys that your child is playing with. Follow along with what your child is doing. Talk about it. Show your toddler a new way to play with a toy. 	<p>When parents let their children be the leaders, they give children opportunities to explore and learn, and they get to know their children better.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use short and simple sentences. If your toddler is using one word at a time to talk, use two or three words when talking to him or her. Likewise, if your toddler is using two or three words to talk, use three to five words in sentences responding to him or her. 	<p>Children can easily hear new words and sentences, and it's easier for them to copy what parents say.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait for your toddler to talk. Sometimes a toddler will need up to five seconds before answering you. Five seconds may seem like a long time, but at this age, a child needs time to figure out and find the words he or she wants to say. 	<p>When parents wait for their children to talk, they create opportunities for their children to express interests, feelings and ideas in their own way.</p>



Strategies for communicating with preschoolers	Why these strategies are important
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REPEAT what your child says using the correct words or pronunciation and complete sentences. It is important that your child have opportunities to hear the correct way of saying words and sentences. It is not necessary to ask your child to repeat them after you. 	<p>This strategy gives children a correct model without having them repeat or correct mistakes. Gradually, with good models, they will learn how to say things the way they hear parents model them. It shows children that parents are listening and paying attention to what they have to say.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADD new words to what your child says. You might add describing words, little words that your child left out or a whole new sentence. For example, if your child says, “Truck go fast,” you could expand the conversation by saying, “The fire truck is going really fast. It’s going to put the fire out!” 	<p>This lets children know that parents are interested in what they say. It gives them a positive model of good language using new words and longer sentences.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASK more open-ended questions in conversation and when reading books together. This helps your child answer with more than one or two words. Ask, “What’s she going to do?” instead of “Is she going to bed?” Ask “Why?”, “How?” or “What do you think will happen next?” questions. 	<p>This encourages children to express their ideas using more than one or two word answers. It gives them confidence and practice in telling what they want, feel and think, using more words and complete sentences.</p>



Strategies for communicating with kindergarteners	Why these strategies are important
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use colour (e.g., red, green), number (e.g., one, four) and location (e.g., in, under) words in directions. For example, you might say, “Can you put one red apple in the basket?” 	<p>Parents and teachers use these types of words all the time in the directions they give. It is important that children understand these words so that they can follow along and understand what is going on around them.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play with sounds. Read books, sing songs and play games that have rhyme (e.g., <u>car</u>, <u>star</u>, <u>far</u>) and alliteration (words that share the same starting sound, such as: <u>seal</u>, <u>sing</u>, <u>sand</u>). Talk about how words can end with the same sounds or begin with the same sounds. For example, when reading a story aloud, draw attention to rhyming words. “Jam and ham sound the same at the end of the word. They rhyme.” 	<p>Sound play builds a strong foundation for listening and learning to read and write. It helps children understand that words are made of sounds and that these sounds are represented by letters.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use lots of describing words when you are talking to your child. Talk about the size, shape, colour and use of things. For example, “Let’s go pick some round, red, sweet apples off of the tree” or “I like to eat crisp and crunchy apples.” 	<p>Using lots of describing words when talking to children helps them learn new words and express themselves more clearly. This will also make what they have to say more interesting to their listeners.</p>



These strategies can be used in any language. Encourage parents to talk to their children in the language they know best!

Participant Handout

Strategies for Communicating with Young Children

Baby

- **Wait and watch for your baby to communicate.** This could be with an action, a sound or a word.
- **Copy your baby's sounds and actions.** When you imitate your baby, he or she will likely make the same sound or action again. This becomes a fun turn-taking game.
- **Talk to your baby about anything.** Talk about your day, what you are doing and what you see. Use lots of expression in your voice.



Toddler



- **Let your toddler be the leader.** Join in and play with your child. Play with the toys that he or she is playing with. Follow along with what he or she is doing. Talk about what he or she is doing. Show your toddler a new way to play with a toy.
- **Use short and simple sentences.** If your toddler is using one word at a time to talk, use two or three words when you respond back. Likewise, if your toddler is using two or three words to talk, use three to five words in your sentences.
- **Wait for your toddler to talk.** Sometimes a toddler will need up to five seconds before answering you. Five seconds may seem like a long time, but at this age, a child needs time to figure out and find the words he or she wants to say.

Preschooler

- **REPEAT** what your child says using the correct words or pronunciation and complete sentences. It is important that your child have opportunities to hear the correct way of saying words and sentences. It is not necessary to ask your child to repeat them after you.
- **ADD** new words to what your child says. You might add describing words, little words that your child left out or a whole new sentence. For example, if your child says, “Truck go fast,” you could expand the conversation by saying, “The fire truck is going really fast. It’s going to put the fire out!”
- **ASK** more open-ended questions in conversation and when reading books together. This helps your child answer with more than one or two words. Ask, “What’s she going to do?” instead of “Is she going to bed?” Ask “Why?”, “How?” or “What do you think will happen next?” questions.

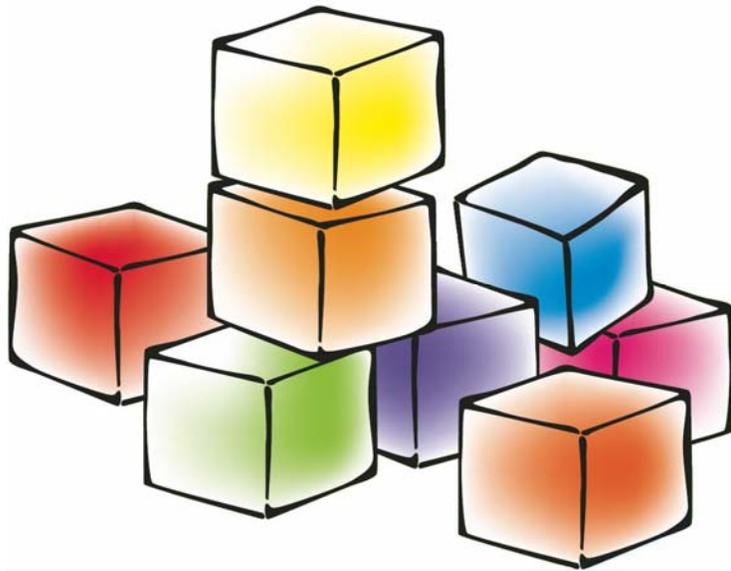


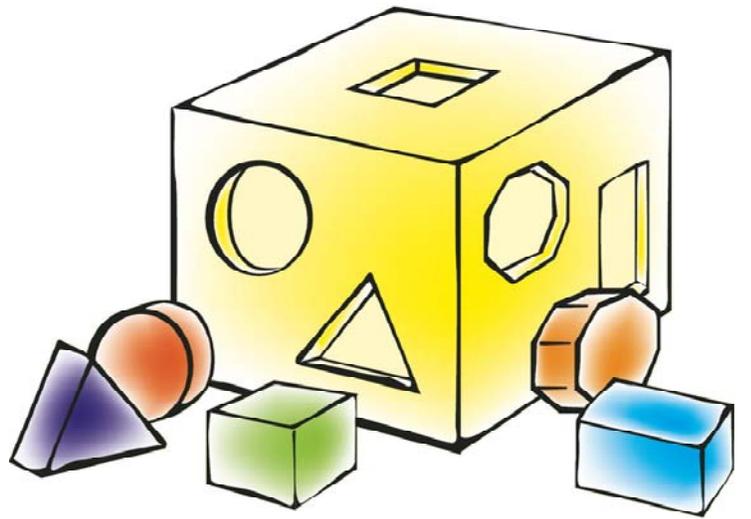
Kindergartener

- **Use colour** (e.g., red, green), **number** (e.g., one, four) and **location** (e.g., in, under) words in directions. For example, you might say, “Can you put **one red** apple **in** the basket?”
- **Play with sounds.** Read books, sing songs and play games that use rhyme (e.g., car, star, far) and alliteration (words that share the same starting sound, such as: seal, sing, sand). Talk about how words can end with the same sounds or begin with the same sounds. For example, when reading a story aloud, draw attention to rhyming words. “Jam and ham sound the same at the end of the word. They rhyme.”
- **Use lots of describing words when you are talking to your child.** Talk about the size, shape, colour and use of things. For example, “Let’s go pick some round, red, sweet apples off of the tree” or “I like to eat crisp and crunchy apples.”



These strategies can be used in any language. Talk to your child in the language you know best.





Creating language-rich environments for children birth to five years

Application of Strategies Activity #C2

Making the Most of Everyday Activities

Time 20 to 30 minutes

Purpose To identify everyday activities that parents can use to create language-learning opportunities.

Grouping large group, small groups

Materials

- chart paper and marker
- copies of participant handout *Making the Most of Everyday Activities*
- pens

Introduction “Language learning happens everyday in your home and in almost everything that you do. Consider the types of everyday activities that your family does such as getting dressed, taking a bath or setting the table for a meal. Everyday activities are wonderful opportunities to enrich your children’s language experience.”

Process

1. Ask participants to brainstorm everyday activities they do at home that could encourage language. Record these ideas on posted chart paper.
2. Give each participant a copy of the participant handout *Making the Most of Everyday Activities*. Point out the list of sample strategies at the top of the chart. For more information on the rationale for each type of strategy, see the *Facilitator Backgrounder* on pages 25–28.
3. Choose one activity, such as getting dressed, to work through as a whole group. Work through one strategy for each age group. Encourage the group to think of specific examples of words, phrases and questions that will help their children learn new words and ideas as they get dressed. Record these ideas on posted chart paper. Draw an enlarged version of the following chart:

Age _____ Getting Dressed		
Strategy _____		
Words	Phrases/Sentences	Questions

(See the *Facilitator Backgrounder* on pages 35–36 for ideas on what these examples might look like.)

4. Ask participants to find a partner. Each set of partners chooses two everyday activities from the brainstormed list. Partners can also add new activities to the list. Using the participant handout *Making the Most of Everyday Activities*, partners have five minutes to discuss how each of these activities could create opportunities for language and record these ideas.
5. In the large group, return to the brainstormed list and ask partners to share one or two ideas of things they could say for the everyday activities on the list.

Facilitator tips

- If a set of partners have children at different ages, the partners can still work together by each choosing a strategy that matches their child's age.
- *For families who speak more than one language at home:*
Remind participants to speak to their children in the language they know best.

For additional information

If participants have concerns about their children's language development, encourage them to contact a speech-language pathologist in their area.

Take home

Encourage parents to identify one activity they will use as an opportunity for encouraging language development with their children over the next week.

Everyday Activity: Getting dressed

Baby

Strategy: Talk to your baby about anything.

Sample words	Sample phrases, sentences and questions
dressed shorts diaper dry clean tickle	<p>Time to get dressed. What should we wear today? Let's see. I think it's going to be hot today. Let's get some shorts for you. I know you like to be cool. Here's a nice short set.</p> <p>Okay, time to change your diaper. You are all wet. Let's get you nice and dry. We'll clean you up and you'll feel so good. Now you are all clean.</p> <p>I'm going to tickle you. Yes, I am. Tickle, tickle, tickle. Ha, ha, ha! You like that tickle stuff.</p>

Toddler

Strategy: Use short and simple sentences.

Sample words	Sample phrases and sentences	Sample questions
<p>underwear, socks, shirt, pants, dress, tights, skirt, blouse, sweater, sweatshirt, shorts, pyjamas, diaper</p> <p>on, off one, two colour words (e.g., red, green, yellow) words describing patterns (e.g., stripes, polka dot)</p>	<p>Let's take your pyjamas off. Now—diaper off. Time for a clean diaper. Next, underwear on. Time to put your shirt on. Here are your pants. Put on one leg, two legs. Sock time! One sock, two socks. This is a pretty dress. What a nice striped shirt. Here's your dinosaur shirt.</p>	<p>What's next? What else do we need? Which shirt? Where are your shoes?</p>

Preschooler

Strategy: Ask more open-ended questions.

Sample words	Sample phrases and sentences	Sample questions
	<p>Time to get dressed. You still have your pjs on. It's cold today so you need to wear long pants.</p> <p>You don't have anything on your feet.</p>	<p>What are you going to do first? Which ones will you wear?</p> <p>What shirt goes with those pants? What else do you need to wear? What do you think you should do about that?</p>

Kindergartener

Strategy: Use lots of describing words.

Sample describing words	Sample phrases and sentences	Sample questions
<p>long, short small, big tight, loose polka dot, striped ruffled boxer track pant fleece sweater zipper, button running shoe sandal, flip flop hoody, jeans clean, dirty hangers, hooks dresser, drawer</p>	<p>This shirt is very long. It looks warm and cosy.</p> <p>Those flip-flops make funny noises.</p> <p>Here's your woolly red sweater with the star buttons.</p>	<p>What are you going to wear today? We're going to the park; what do you need to wear? We're going swimming; what do we need to bring?</p> <p>How about you pick out a shirt to go with the red polka dot skirt. Will the white one with ruffles go?</p> <p>Tell me about who's on your shirt—what's Spiderman doing?</p>

Making the Most of Everyday Activities

Everyday activity _____

Check one strategy:

Baby

- Wait and watch for your baby to communicate
- Copy your baby's sounds and actions
- Talk about anything

Preschooler

- Repeat your child's words, using correct words, pronunciation and complete sentences
- Add new words to what your child says
- Ask open-ended questions

Toddler

- Let your child be the leader
- Use short, simple sentences
- Wait for your child to talk

Kindergartener

- Use colour, number and location words in directions
- Play with sounds
- Use lots of describing words

Sample words	Sample phrases and sentences	Sample questions

One everyday activity that I will turn into a language-learning opportunity for my child over the next week is _____.

Creating language-rich environments for children birth to five years

Application of Strategies Activity #C3 Community Connections

Time	20 to 30 minutes
Purpose	To brainstorm community places and events that are opportunities for children and their families to use, explore and learn new words and ideas.
Grouping	three small groups (or six small groups if there are more than 15 participants)
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• three pieces of chart paper with the brainstorm topic written at the top:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Places to visit in your community– Special events in your community– Free activities in your community• three colours of felt pens• copies of participant handout <i>Community Connections</i>
Introduction	“Children learn language through the things they do everyday. As parents, you can introduce your children to new experiences, new ideas and new words through special places, events and activities in your communities.”
Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Introduce the brainstorming process. For example, “Brainstorming is an opportunity for us to work together to create a list of ideas on a certain topic. We’re going to use this activity to make a list of places, activities and special events in the community that families can use to create language-rich experiences for their young children.”2. Organize the whole group into three smaller groups. Give each group a different colour of felt pen so it is clear where each group’s list begins and ends.3. Ask each group to choose individual group members to take on the following roles:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• record-keeper (to record group’s ideas on the chart paper)• timekeeper (to keep track of the time and let people know when there is one minute left)• transporter (to carry the chart paper to the next group)• presenter (to act as spokesman and share the ideas from the brainstormed list with the whole group).4. Read the topics aloud as you distribute one sheet of chart paper to each group.

- Places to visit in your community
- Special events in your community
- Free activities in your community

5. Let participants know they will have five minutes to make each brainstormed list and then give the start signal. Each group begins its brainstorm and records the ideas on the chart paper.
6. At the end of the five-minute time limit, sound the signal for finishing work on the current sheet.
7. Each “transporter” then carries the chart paper to the next group and the group begins work on the new sheet by reading over the ideas already recorded by the other group. They then use their coloured marker to add new ideas.
8. Do this one more time, until all three groups have written on all three topics.
9. Distribute copies of participant handout *Community Connections*. Each group reviews the list of ideas on the last chart they worked on and chooses one place, event or activity. The group then chooses a strategy for their child’s age and brainstorms sample words, phrases, sentences and questions they could say to create a language-rich experience for their children. (For more information on sample strategies and their rationale, see the *Facilitator Backgrounder* on pages 25–28.)

Facilitator tips

- Focus on free or affordable options. Parents can be excellent resources for each other.
- Post completed charts on the wall for participants to view during break times or after the session.
- *For families who speak more than one language at home:* Encourage families to look for community events and places that will help their children learn about and explore their cultural heritage. Remind participants to speak to their children in the language they know best.

Take home

Encourage participants to identify one new place they would like to visit with their child over the next month.

Application of Strategies Activity #C3

Participant Handout
Community Connections

Community event or place _____

Check one strategy:

Baby

- Wait and watch for your baby to communicate
- Copy your baby's sounds and actions
- Talk about anything

Preschooler

- Repeat your child's words, using correct words, pronunciation and complete sentences
- Add new words to what your child says
- Ask open-ended questions

Toddler

- Let your child be the leader
- Use short, simple sentences
- Wait for your child to talk

Kindergartener

- Use colour, number and location words in directions
- Play with sounds
- Use lots of describing words

Sample Words	Sample Phrases and Sentences	Sample Questions

A new place I'd like to visit with my child is _____.

Creating language-rich environments for children birth to five years

Exploration Activity #D1 Beginning with Books

Time	20 to 30 minutes
Purpose	To explore ideas for how parents can use books to create language-rich opportunities for their children.
Grouping	whole group, partners or small groups
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• examples of different types of books, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– pattern books (e.g., <i>Brown Bear, Brown Bear</i> by Bill Martin, Jr.)– counting and alphabet books– ‘touch and feel’ books– action books (e.g., pop-ups, flaps or sounds)– simple picture books– simple story books– wordless books– information books• copies of participant handout <i>Using Books with Young Children</i>• copies of participant handout <i>Tips for Reading Books with Your Child</i>
Introduction	“There is a wide range of good books for young children. Books are a wonderful way for children to learn about experiences that many people have. How a parent reads a book with his or her child is important—it should be fun and entertaining for both you and your children. It is never too early to read with your children.”
Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Introduce the different types of books for young children by showing a sample book that illustrates each of the following categories:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– pattern books (e.g., <i>Brown Bear, Brown Bear</i> by Bill Martin, Jr.)– counting and alphabet books– ‘touch and feel’ books– action books (e.g., pop-ups, flaps or sounds)– simple picture books– simple story books– wordless books– information books.2. Organize participants into partners or small groups. Have each group pick one of the sample books that they think their children might enjoy.

3. In partners or small groups, read or skim the book and discuss:
 - Why would your child like this book?
 - What are some things your child might learn from this book?
 - What are some tips to make reading this book a fun learning experience?
 - What are some other books you could recommend to other parents?
4. Record ideas on participant handout *Using Books with Young Children*.
5. Ask each set of partners or small groups to share their comments about their book with the larger group.

Facilitator tips

- For suggested titles for books for young children in each of the categories, visit your local library.
- *For families who speak more than one language at home:*
It's important for families to share books in their home language as well as in English. Good quality children's books reflect a family's culture and language. Many Alberta libraries have books available in a number of different languages. Wordless picture books also provide wonderful opportunities for talking about the pictures in both a family's home language and in English.

For additional information

If participants have concerns about their children's language development, encourage them to contact a speech-language pathologist in their area.

Take home

- Invite parents to share ideas for affordable ways to find good quality children's books. Suggestions might include: the local library, garage sales or used book sales.
- Distribute handout *Tips for Reading Books with Your Child* and encourage parents to try out some of the tips over the next week.

Participant Handout
Using Books with Young Children

Title of book _____

Type of book

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> predictable (or pattern) | <input type="checkbox"/> counting or alphabet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> tactile ('touch and feel') | <input type="checkbox"/> action (e.g., pop-ups, flaps, sounds) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> information | <input type="checkbox"/> wordless |
| <input type="checkbox"/> simple picture | <input type="checkbox"/> simple story |

A. Why would your child like this book? (Or why not?)

B. What are some things your child might learn from this book?

C. What are some ways to make reading this book a fun, learning experience?

D. What are other similar books that you and your child have read that you would recommend?



Visit your local library and talk to the children's librarian about choosing books for young children.

Participant Handout

Tips for Reading Books with Your Child

Books for babies

It's never too early to start reading to your baby. At first, you can read anything: the newspaper, parenting books, cook books or magazines. Your baby likes to hear your voice. Later, your baby can look at the pictures and hold the book. Of course, your baby will put books in his or her mouth!

What to look for:	Tips to try:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • books with only one or two pictures on a page • books with photographs of people and other babies • durable books like board, soft cloth or plastic books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use a higher pitch and exaggerated tone • make up a story for the book • talk about the pictures you see

Books for toddlers

Your toddler is very active. Read as much of the book as possible. Sometimes you will only have your toddler's attention to read a few pages at a time. Talk about the pictures. Look for those opportunities when your toddler shows an interest in being read to—when your toddler brings you a book, you know it's a good time to read.

What to look for:	Tips to try:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • durable books like board, soft cloth or plastic • books with bright, colourful pictures • books with actions they can do (e.g., lift-up flaps, sound makers) • books with few words on each page • books about their favourite things • first word books • pattern books • books that use fun sounds (e.g., “bumpity, bump, bump”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keep books in an easy-to-reach place • let toddlers hold the book and turn the pages • talk about the pictures in the book

Books for preschoolers and kindergarteners

Your preschooler can sit for a longer time and listen to a whole story. Your child may like to hear the same story over and over. Let your child “read” the story to you. Ask your child to tell you what is going to happen next. Pretend to be the characters in the story and act it out together.

What to look for:	Tips to try:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • books with bright, coloured pictures • alphabet and counting books • books about their favourite characters or interests • stories with 1, 2 or 3 sentences on each page • books that are predictable and have repeated words and patterns to help children guess what comes next • books with many rhyming words and fun sounds (e.g., “Whoosh!”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • let your child choose books to share • sit close together as you read so both your child and you can see the words and pictures • use expression in your voice to bring the story alive and hold your child’s attention • encourage your child to finish a sentence in a favourite story • take turns “reading” one page at a time • talk about the story with your child • encourage your child to interact throughout the story by pointing to the pictures and by asking questions • help your child connect actions, themes or characters with other books you have read together • point out the letters in the words • point to letters that are also in your child’s name

Visit your local library

- Talk to your librarian about good books for young children.
- Let your child choose books to take home.

Creating language-rich environments for children birth to five years

Exploration Activity #D2

Singing to Speak

Time	20 to 30 minutes
Purpose	To identify favourite songs to share with children and to show participants how to make up songs at home.
Grouping	whole group, small groups of three or four
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• chart paper and marker• copies of participant handout <i>Singing to Speak</i>• pens
Introduction	“Singing songs is a great way to learn language. Singing songs about what you are doing or playing with can help children learn new words. If there isn’t a song about what you are doing, you and your children can even make up your own songs.”
Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Invite participants to share the names of their children’s favourite songs. Record the list on posted chart paper.2. Discuss how songs can be used everyday as an opportunity for families to use language in a different way.3. Invite participants to share their tips for helping young children learn a song. Tips could include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sing slowly. This makes it easier for children to learn the words.• Add actions to your song. This will help them learn the words and it makes singing even more fun.• Sing the same songs over and over again. Children like to hear the same songs over and over. Repetition is an important way to learn new words.• Pause and give your child a chance to fill in a missing word. Pausing at the end of a phrase before the last word or two gives children an opportunity to sing some of the words. For example, parent sings “Mary had a little lamb, little lamb, little” and then pauses for child to sing “lamb.”• Play with the rhyme in songs. Change the words in the song slightly to make new rhymes. For example, “Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream, if you see a crocodile, don’t forget to scream.”• Make up a song about what you are doing. Take a familiar tune and make up new words that describe what you are doing.

4. Ask for a show of hands for how many participants have made up their own little songs with their children. Invite volunteers to share the words for the songs and tell a little bit about how their family uses the song. (Before asking for volunteers, be sure and let participants know that they will not be asked to sing the songs for the group unless they choose to do so!)
5. Divide participants into small groups of three or four and challenge them to use the well-known tune for “Happy Birthday” to compose a short song based on an everyday activity. Groups can record the words for their new songs on the participant handout *Singing to Speak*.
6. Ask each small group to share their song with the whole group—either by singing the song as a group or one member reading the words.

Facilitator tips

For families who speak more than one language at home:

It’s important for families to share songs in their home language as well as in English. Music and songs reflect a family’s culture and language, and provide wonderful opportunities for exploring both the family’s home language and English.

For additional information

If participants have concerns about their children’s language development, encourage them to contact a speech-language pathologist in their area.

Take home

Encourage participants to choose one favourite song from the brainstormed list to share with their children and one favourite activity for creating a new song with their children over the next week.

Participant Handout Singing to Speak

Tips for singing with your child

- **Sing slowly.** This makes it easier for your child to learn the words.
- **Add actions to your song.** This will help your child learn the words and it makes singing even more fun.
- **Sing the same songs over and over again.** Children like to hear the same songs over and over. Repetition is an important way to learn new words.
- **Pause and give your child a chance to fill in a missing word.** Pausing at the end of a phrase before the last word or two gives your child an opportunity to sing some of the words. For example, you sing “Mary had a little lamb, little lamb, little,” then pause to let your child sing “lamb.”
- **Play with the rhyme in songs.** Change the words in the song slightly to make new rhymes. For example, “Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream, if you see a crocodile, don’t forget to scream.”
- **Make up a song about what you are doing.** Take a familiar tune and make up new words that go with something you are doing.

Favourite family songs



Think about something that you and your child will do together this week. Using the tune 'Happy Birthday' (or another familiar tune), make up words to create your own song.

Example: Mom and Kriti walk home
 Mom and Kriti walk home
 We had fun at the playground
 It's time to walk home!



Song: _____

Sample activities for singing about	Sample familiar tunes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making dinner • driving together • going for a walk • buying groceries • getting dressed • planting the garden • doing laundry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star • Old MacDonald • Hush Little Baby • Frère Jacques/Are You Sleeping • I'm a Little Teapot • Baa, Baa, Black Sheep • Farmer in the Dell



For more songs, try out Baby Karaoke, from the Raising Children Network, an Australian parenting Web site, at <http://www.raisingchildren.net.au> or

the Banff Library's online CD of children's songs at http://www.banfflibrary.ab.ca/babytime_cd.htm.

Creating language-rich environments for children birth to five years

Exploration Activity #D3 Crafts and Conversations

Time	20 to 30 minutes
Purpose	To make bubbles and explore how doing simple crafts together can inspire language play.
Grouping	large group, small groups of three or four
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2-litre bottles (such as pop bottles)• dish soap• corn syrup• warm water• copies of participant handout <i>Crafts and Conversations</i>• copies of participant handout <i>Recipes for Fun</i>• wire pipe cleaners (or bubble wands)
Introduction	“Doing simple crafts together can create opportunities to have fun with your children and talk about new things in new ways.”
Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Organize participants into small groups of three to four people and give each group a bottle to put their homemade bubble solution in, several pipe cleaners, and copies of participant handouts <i>Crafts and Conversations</i> and <i>Recipes for Fun</i>.2. Groups have ten minutes to make and experiment with the bubble solution and discuss ideas for how this craft activity could create opportunities for conversations with young children. Use participant handout to record ideas for:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• words to use when playing with bubbles• phrases, sentences and questions to use when playing with bubbles.3. Ask each small group to share one idea from each of the columns of their handout with the large group.4. Invite participants to share ideas about other craft activities young children enjoy. These ideas can also be recorded on the participant handout.

Facilitator tips

- As the small groups are sharing their ideas, you may want to add from the following sample responses:

Ways to play with bubbles	Words to use	Phrases, sentences and questions to use
making the bubble solution	fill mix shake	Fill it up. What do we need to do next? Mix, mix, mix! Shake it gently.
opening the container	open bubble more	More bubbles? Open bubbles. What do we need to do first?
dipping the wand	in out wet	Put the wand in. Pull the wand out. Wet bubbles. Your hand is wet.
blowing the bubbles	blow bubbles	Blow the bubbles. Lots of bubbles. My turn.
chasing the bubbles	pop catch high	Try to pop them. How many can you catch? Oh, it's too high.

- Remind the parents that how the craft looks when it is done is not as important as the fun they have making it with their children.
- For families who speak more than one language at home:*
Crafts can be wonderful opportunities to share and explore your family's cultural heritage. When doing crafts with your children, use the language you know the best.

For additional information

If participants have concerns about their children's language development, encourage them to contact a speech-language pathologist in their area.

Take home

Encourage participants to try out the *Recipes for Fun* at home over the next week.

Exploration Activity #D3

Participant Handout Crafts and Conversations

In your small group, make some bubbles and discuss how this type of activity could create opportunities for your child's language development. Record your ideas on the chart below.

Ways to play with bubbles	Words to use as you make and play with bubbles	Phrases, sentences and questions to use when you make and play with bubbles
Making the bubble solution		
Opening the container		
Dipping the wand		
Blowing the bubbles		
Chasing the bubbles		

Other craft activities that your child enjoys:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Bubbles

Materials

- large bottle (2 litre)
- warm water
- 1 cup of dish soap
- 2 tablespoons corn syrup
- pipe cleaners (for wands)

Directions

1. Fill a large bottle with warm water, leaving room for the soap and corn syrup.
(Be sure to start with the water first or you will end up with a bottle full of suds!)
2. Add the dish soap and corn syrup. Stir a bit and then put the lid tightly on the bottle.
3. Gently shake the bottle to mix.
4. Let the bubbles stand for a bit to let the air settle.
5. Twist a pipe cleaner into a circle for a wand.
6. Dip wand into bubble mixture and gently blow on wand.

Playdough recipe

Materials

- 1 cup water
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- flour as needed
- ½ cup salt
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar
- food colouring

Directions

1. Mix all ingredients in a saucepan and heat, stirring until mixture is thick.
2. Allow to cool.
3. Knead until the dough is not sticky (add flour as needed).
4. Keep dough in a covered container or resealable bag.



For more craft ideas, go to <http://www.wondertime.go.com>.

Creating language-rich environments for children birth to five years

Exploration Activity #D4

Games Galore

Time	20 to 30 minutes
Purpose	To discover and demonstrate how to use favourite family games to enrich language.
Grouping	whole group, partners
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• chart paper and marker• copies of participant handout <i>Games Galore</i>• pens
Introduction	<p>“Children love to play games. From the time they are babies, games help children learn the basics of communication. Games also help young children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ask and answer questions (e.g., Mother, May I?)• give and follow directions (e.g., Simon Says)• tell stories (e.g., Neverending Story)• take turns and play fair (e.g., card games)• remember things (e.g., “I’m going on a trip and I’m taking ...”)• learn new words (e.g., I Spy)• describe things (e.g., 20 Questions). <p>Let’s share some favourite family games.”</p>
Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ask participants to turn to a partner and take turns describing a favourite game that they play with their children.2. Distribute participant handout <i>Games Galore</i>. Next, introduce an old game with a “new twist.” For example, “Many of our favourite games are opportunities for language development. But, with a little twist, some of these games can offer even richer language opportunities. Consider the old favourite ‘Hide and Go Seek.’ Your handout has directions for a new version of this game. Please try it out with your partner and talk about how to add language as you play this game.”3. Give partners five minutes to try out the game, each taking turns as both the “hider” and the “seeker.” Encourage the participants to try out as many different language cues as possible.4. In large group, invite participants to share some of the language cues they used while playing “Hide and Go Seek with a Twist.”

5. In whole group, share names of favourite games and record list on posted chart paper. Participants may wish to record some of the game ideas on their handout. (See *Facilitator Backgrounder* on pages 59–60 for sample games that might be discussed.)
6. Ask participants if there is an unfamiliar game on the list that they would like to learn more about. If a particular game is identified, ask the contributor to briefly explain the new game to the group.
7. Discuss how some of the game examples from the brainstormed list might be played with a language-rich “twist.” Participants can jot down these ideas on their handout.

Facilitator tips

- Remind parents that many kinds of games can be created with a little imagination and home-made materials. It is not necessary to rely on expensive store-bought games.
- *For families who speak more than one language at home:*
Take opportunities to play games in your family’s first language. Special games can also communicate important aspects of a family’s heritage and cultural traditions.

For additional information

If participants have concerns about their children’s language development, encourage them to contact a speech-language pathologist in their area.

Take home

Ask participants to think of a favourite family game that they could play with their children over the next week. Challenge them to think of one way to create a “twist” to this game by adding new actions, sounds, words or sentences as they play.

Refer to the *Facilitator Backgrounder: Strategies for Communicating with Young Children* on pages 25–28 for additional information on the following strategies.

Baby

- Wait and watch for your baby to communicate.
- Copy your baby’s sounds and actions.
- Talk to your baby about anything.

Preschooler

- Repeat what your child says using the correct words or pronunciation and complete sentences.
- Add new words to what your child says.
- Ask more open-ended questions in conversation and when reading books together.

Toddler

- Let your toddler be the leader.
- Use short and simple sentences.
- Wait for your toddler to talk.

Kindergartener

- Use colour, number and location words in directions.
- Play with sounds.
- Use lots of describing words when you are talking to your child.

As participants brainstorm favourite family games, the following examples may be helpful for generating more discussion.

Examples of favourite family games	Age group	Communication you could add (e.g., actions, sounds, words, phrases, sentences)
<i>Peek-a-Boo!</i>	Baby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover your eyes—“Where’s baby?” • Turn head, eyes wide open • “Peek-a-boo! I see you!” • “Here’s Marenika! <i>Under</i> the blanket!”
<i>Ring Around the Rosy</i>	Toddler/ Preschooler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chant rhyme slowly with lots of expression. • Change the ending to “We all jump up” or “We all clap hands” or “We all stamp feet” to reinforce different actions and body part names. • Let your child change the action at the end.

Examples of favourite family games	Age group	Communication you could add (e.g., actions, sounds, words, phrases, sentences)
<p><i>What's Missing?</i></p> <p>Place three or four objects on the floor. The child looks at them for about one minute and then covers his or her eyes while one object is removed. Then the child looks at the remaining objects and guesses what is missing. Then the child can take a turn removing one item and the parent can guess what's missing.</p>	Preschooler/ Kindergartener	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Together with your child, name all of the objects. • If child guesses what's missing correctly, say, "Yay! The cow! ... Now it's your turn to take one away." • If child says a single word, "Cow?", model the complete question, "Is it the cow?" • If child guesses incorrectly, say, "No, it's not the brush."
<p><i>Red Light, Green Light</i></p> <p>The leader stands at one end of the area and the other players go to the opposite end. The leader says, "Green light" and closes his or her eyes while all players run forward. When the leader yells "Red light," all players stop moving and freeze on the spot. The leader opens his or her eyes and any player spotted moving has to sit down. The leader then calls "Green light" and all players move forward. This continues until one player reaches the leader—that person then becomes the new leader.</p>	Kindergartener	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Red light"—pair with action by holding up hand to indicate stop or by using a red object to reinforce colour • "Green light"—use green object to reinforce colour • "Freeze"—means stand still • "Start line/finish line" • Use skipping, hopping, baby steps or giant steps to get to the finish line. • Use toy cards, trucks, farm animals or any toy to move from start line to finish line.

Exploration Activity #D4

Participant handout Games Galore

Hide and Seek with a Twist—Add more language!

1. Hide a small toy in the room.
2. Ask your child to look for the item as you give clues along the way. For example, hide a teddy bear behind a sofa cushion. Give your child clues, starting with general ones and then moving to more specific ones:
e.g.,
 - a. “Teddy’s hiding someplace you sit.”
 - b. “Teddy’s hiding behind something soft.”
 - c. “Teddy’s behind a soft, blue square.”
 - d. “You found her behind the blue pillow!”
3. Now let your child hide the toy and give you clues to find it. Prompt your child to give broad clues such as:
e.g.,
 - a. “Is it *high* (gesture ‘high’ with your hands) or *low* (gesture)?”
 - b. “Is it *next to* the door (point), or *far away from* the door (point to side of room opposite the door).”

Toys or objects to hide	Where	Sample clues (Think: actions, sounds, words, sentences)

This activity adapted from Alberta Mental Health Board, *The Bounce Back Book: Building Resiliency Skills in Your Preschooler* (Edmonton, AB: Alberta Mental Health Board, n.d.), p. 16.

Favorite family games

Actions, words, phrases that could be added



For more fun activities to do with your child, see

- Toy cards in the *Preschool Talk Box* at <http://www.parentlinkalberta.ca>
- <http://www.wondertime.go.com/create-and-play/games>
- <http://www.showkidsthefun.com>.

Creating language-rich environments for children birth to five years

Wrap-up Activity #E1

Where Do I Go From Here?

Time	5 to 10 minutes
Purpose	To provide participants with an opportunity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• summarize what they have learned from the workshop• reflect on the importance of their role in creating language-rich environments for their children.
Grouping	individual, whole group
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• copies of participant handout <i>Where Do I Go From Here?</i>• pens• copies of take-home quote (optional)
Introduction	“This last activity will give you an opportunity to think about what you learned today and choose one idea to use this week.”
Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Distribute copies of the participant handout <i>Where Do I Go From Here?</i>2. Provide three or four minutes for participants to jot down their answers to the following questions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are 3 things you have learned today?• What are 2 activities that you enjoy doing with your child?• What is 1 new idea you can do with your child to encourage language?3. When individuals have finished writing, ask for three or four volunteers to share their responses to each question with the whole group.
Facilitator tips	Write take-home quote on chart paper and post at the end of the workshop or distribute a copy of the quote to each participant (see page 65).
For additional information	If participants have concerns about their children’s language development, encourage them to contact a speech-language pathologist in their area.
Take home	Share the following quote with participants. <i>“If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.”</i> ~ Rachel Carson

Wrap-up Activity #E1

Participant Handout
Where Do I Go From Here?

Please answer the following questions:

1. What are **3** things you have learned from the workshop today?

- _____
- _____
- _____

2. What are **2** activities you enjoy doing with your child?

- _____
- _____

3. What is **1** new idea you can do with your child to encourage language?

- _____

“If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.”

~ Rachel Carson

“If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.”

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~ Rachel Carson

Creating language-rich environments for children birth to five years

Wrap-up Activity #E2 Remember When?

Time	5 to 10 minutes
Purpose	To provide participants with an opportunity to reflect on the importance of their role in creating language-rich environments for their children.
Grouping	whole group
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• copies of take-home quote (optional)
Introduction	“Today we explored strategies and activities for how to create language-rich experiences for your children. We’ll wrap up today by thinking about a time in your childhood when you felt listened to and understood by a caring adult.”
Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ask participants to take a few moments, close their eyes and think back to their own childhood and to a happy time when they felt connected and really listened to by an important adult in their life.2. Use guiding questions, such as the following, to help participants recreate the memory.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who was there? Was it a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, teacher or neighbour?• Where were you? Were you at home, outside, at the store or somewhere special?• What were you doing? Were you helping wash the car, playing a game, reading, driving somewhere or building a fort in the snow?• What was said?• How did you know you were being listened to?• How did that make you feel?3. Invite a few volunteers to share some of these memories with the whole group.4. Summarize the activity by discussing the following points.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are many memories that we have doing different things with the important adults in our lives such as driving in a car, reading a special book, playing in the snow, playing a game, going somewhere special or doing everyday chores like dishes or laundry.• Our memories may involve different people: our parents, our grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers, coaches—any person who took a special interest in us.

- It doesn't matter **what** we did with that special adult, what mattered was that we were doing something **together!**
- Children learn language everyday. They learn about their world by seeing, touching, listening, tasting and doing. Any activity you do with your child is a chance to learn language.
- It makes a difference how you talk with and respond to your child during those times.

Facilitator tips

Write take-home quote on chart paper and post at the end of the workshop or distribute a copy of the quote to each participant (see page 69).

For additional information

If participants have concerns about their children's language development, encourage them to contact a speech-language pathologist in their area.

Take home

Share the following quote with participants.

“Once a human being has arrived on this earth, communication is the largest single factor determining what kinds of relationships he makes with others and what happens to him in the world about him.”

~ Virginia Satir

“Once a human being has arrived on this earth, communication is the largest single factor determining what kinds of relationships he makes with others and what happens to him in the world about him.”

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