

International Adoptees

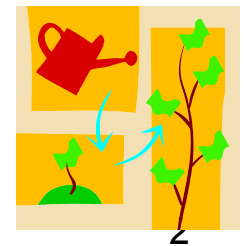


What parents should know
about speech & language
development



Considerations for Development

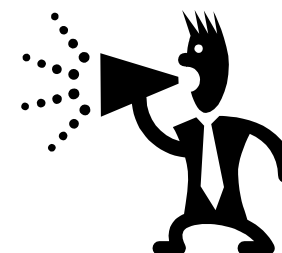
- New Environment
 - We all need to adjust to any new situation
 - Not uncommon for children to be less verbal
- New Language & Culture
 - Language and culture of home country may be different from new country
 - Not uncommon for children to be less verbal
- Old Environment Possibilities of:
 - Environmental deprivation
 - Poverty
 - Malnutrition
 - These may increase risk of developmental delays
- So what do we do?



What is Speech Versus Language?

• SPEECH

- The **oral-verbal** means of communicating.
- Areas of Speech include:
 - Articulation: How speech sounds are made
 - e.g., children must learn how to produce the “s” sound in order to say “sun” instead of “tun”
 - Voice: Breathing causes the vocal folds to vibrate and produce sound
 - e.g., overuse or misuse and can lead to hoarseness or loss of voice
 - Fluency: The rhythm of speech
 - e.g., sound and word repetitions and hesitations disrupt fluency



What is Speech Versus Language?



LANGUAGE: is a system of shared rules. It can be oral, written or gestural

- Components of language include:
 - **Phonology**: Rules of **sound** combination to create words
 - [s], [i], [t] = Seat
 - **Morphology**: Rules that govern **meaningful sound units**
 - “-ed” to mark past tense
 - **Semantics**: Regards **meaning** in words, sentences, conversations, etc.
 - “course ” can be a **pathway** or a **class** you take
 - **Syntax**: Rules that govern **how words are combined** to make phrases and sentences
 - **Determiner + Subject + Verb + Det + Object** → “The dog ate the bone.”
 - **Pragmatics**: Rules that govern **language use**
 - **eye contact** duration, **standing distance** from another speaker, **turn taking**

How Language Components Interact

- FORM

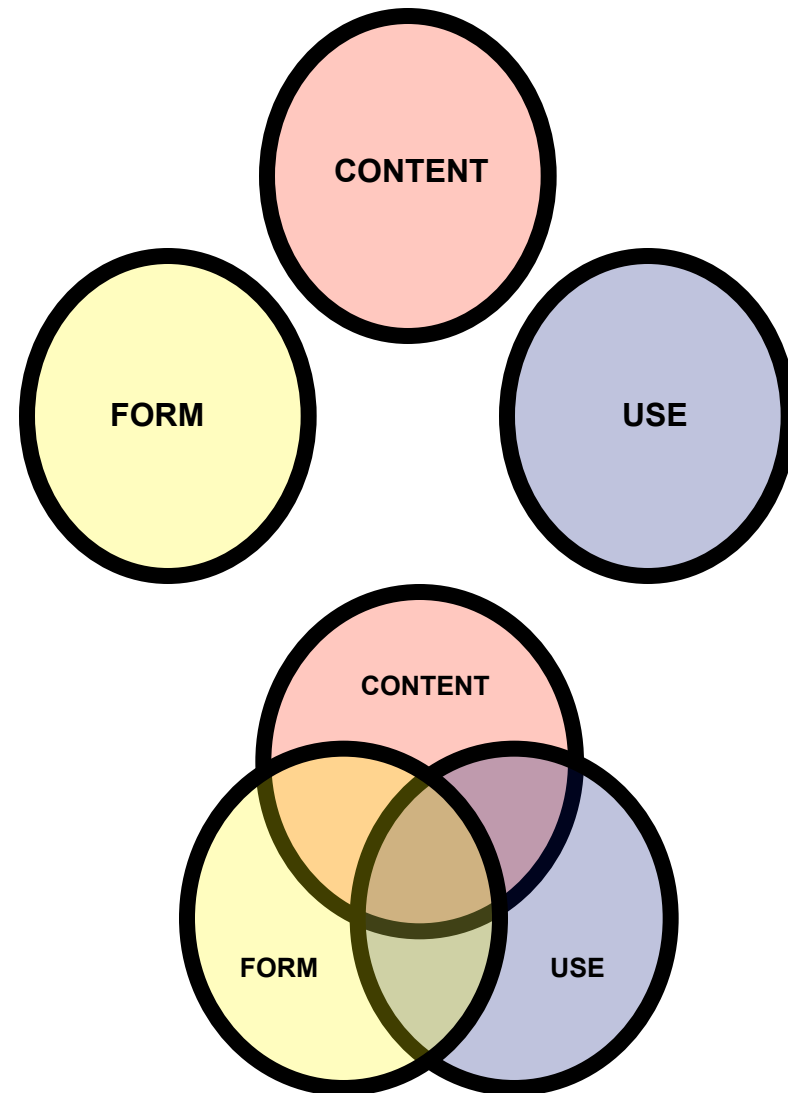
- Phonology: Sound structure rules
- Morphology: Meaningful sound units
- Syntax: Phrases and sentence structure rules

- CONTENT

- Semantics: Meaning

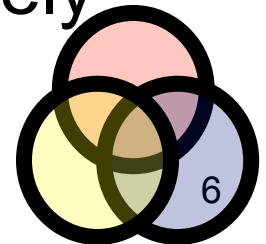
- USE

- Pragmatics: Rules of use



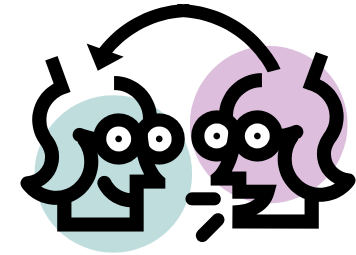
How Language Components Interact

- Language components are integrated
- Trouble in one component may lead to trouble in another
 - Trouble using proper word order (**Form**) can negatively effect...
 - the meaning of a sentence (**Content**), this can have a negative impact on...
 - successful transmission of the message (**Use**)
- Trouble with speech clarity can also negatively impact each of these areas as well



Look Both Ways: Language is a two-way street

Comprehension & Expression



- Language Comprehension
 - Incoming information
 - What we hear, see or read
- Language Expression
 - Outgoing information
 - What we say, do or write



Speech & Language Development

- Speech and language development begins in the womb



- There are predictable developmental milestones
 - We begin looking for these skills at birth

- Errors in development

- Some errors are **normal**

- These will correct on their own as motor and cognitive skills grow

- Some errors are normal, but **persist** too long **or** are **atypical**

- These need therapy to correct



Bilingual Language Development



- Bilingual children should develop their languages at the same rate as monolinguals
- Children learning a second language (L2) may experience NORMAL developmental errors
 - *silent period*
 - use *telegraphic output*
 - *mix their languages* within an utterance, experience *interference* and use the grammar system of one language with the vocabulary of another
 - experience *language loss* of native language skills if they are not maintained
 - fossilization
- As skills develop, developmental errors diminish



Learning English: Arrival before 24 months

- The younger a child begins a second language (L2) the better they will learn
- A child adopted at 24 months or younger should have English skills that are within normal limits for age after one year (Glennen 2007)
 - Comprehension
 - Production
 - Articulation
- Full language potential, however, keeps developing though the preschool years (Glennen 2007)
 - Syntax especially



Learning English: Arrival after 24 months

- Less is known about this age group
- Data suggests there is rapid catch up as well
- Comprehension develops faster than expression
 - Evidence from Sharon Glennen's work



Facilitating Second Language Development

(Kohnert 2008)

Means: Physical, intellectual, social-emotional, emotional abilities

Motive: Language is a tool to meet wants and needs

Opportunity: Availability of environments to communicate

***Functions:** Spoken, written, gestured,
formal/informal, personal, educational, vocational

***Environments:** Home, school, work, play ground,
community centers, world wide web

*Language skills increase with increases of meaningful
interactions

*Language skills decrease as interactions are limited or
not meaningful



Myth: *Adopted Children Suffer Permanent Delays*

(Glennen, 2008)

- Generally speaking international adoptees will not suffer life-long learning disorders
 - Mild delays may be noted on arrival
 - Most adopted at 24 months or younger catch up
 - Those not meeting this benchmark should be evaluated
 - Academic development is generally average though later school years
 - Pre-adoption deprivation could be a factor
 - Age of adoption is important. Those adopted by age 2 years tend to fair well



Myth: International Adoptees are always bilingual (Glennen, 2008)

- Generally speaking international adoptees...
 - do not need many years to catch up in the new language
 - are not bilingual if the first language (L1) is not maintained
 - L1 expressive skills lost in 6 to 12 weeks in 3 to 4 year olds and receptive skills are lost in 16 to 22 weeks (Gindis, 2003)
- Gather detailed information about speech & language and other areas of development, if possible
 - Especially for children over 3-years





How to spot a problem

Glennen's Guidelines (2008)



- Consider the areas of cognitive-linguistic development
 - Socialization
 - Gestures
 - Symbolic Play
 - Comprehension
 - Vocalization



How to spot a problem

Glennen's Guidelines (2008)



- Socialization
 - Regular eye contact
 - Frequent communication attempts
 - Varied communication attempts
 - Commenting
 - Obtaining attention
 - Requesting
 - Protesting
- Refer to a speech-language pathologist if you do not see these



How to spot a problem

Glennen's Guidelines (2008)



- Gestures
 - Gestures combined with vocalizations
 - Gestures combined with eye gaze
 - looking from toy to mom and back
 - Varied gestures
 - Combined gestures
- Refer to a speech-language pathologist if you do not see these



How to spot a problem

Glennen's Guidelines (2008)



- Symbolic Play
 - Should be on par for age
- Westby Play Scale
 - 9 to 12 months: seeks objects, pulls toys with string
 - 13 to 17 months: explores in trial and error fashion
 - 17 to 19 months: child pretends to sleep or eat
 - 19 to 22 months: child makes doll eat or sleep
 - 24 months: pretends to be mommy, dumps & fills
 - 2.5 years: acts out infrequent events like visit to doctor
 - 3 years: sequences in pretend play (e.g., mix, bake, then serve cake)
- Refer to a speech-language pathologist if you do not see on par performance with peers



How to spot a problem



Glennen's Guidelines (2008)

- Comprehension – after 3 months in adoptive home
 - Single words
 - Simple commands (come here, sit down)
 - After age 12 months should have word knowledge on par with peers
 - MacArthur Communicative Inventory – Words & Gestures score should be 47 or higher
- Refer to a speech-language pathologist if you do not see these skills



How to spot a problem

Glennen's Guidelines (2008)



- Vocalizations
 - Frequent vocalizations
 - Varied vocalizations
 - Different syllable structures
 - Number of syllables
 - Repeating and non-repeating syllables
 - Sound inventory
 - Consonants
 - Vowels
 - Vocalizations with intent to communicate
 - True words from age 16 months for adoptees (12 months for non-adopted children)
- Refer to a speech-language pathologist if you do not see these skills

How to foster development



Remember, all activities should match level of **understanding & motor skills**

TALK to your child as you interact. **NAME & BRING ATTENTION** to items, actions, and people you see.

Be a good **MODEL**. Use language one “step” above your child’s output level (e.g., If your child drop’s his/her cup you might say, “Down” “Fell down”, “Cup fell down”, or “Jacob’s cup fell down” depending on his/her output level.)

REPEAT what you say as well as activities. Repetition and redundancy facilitate learning.

RESPOND to your child’s output be it babbles, coos, gurgles, words or phrases. **REPEAT** what infants do. **EXPAND** on your toddler’s output, add a word to their utterance. If they say, “cookie” you can say, “Yummy cookie”.

READ with your child using simple picture books, single photos per page and limited writing for infants. Pictures and text can increase incrementally with age.

VISIT new places. **Any place** can be a learning environment. Talk about what you are **doing, seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling**, etc. while you are there. With toddlers, **Review** what you experienced when you get home. Tell grandma, sister, dad, cousin...

SING songs, recite nursery rhymes, play children’s music as appropriate for child’s age and interests.

PLAY with infants including simple games like “Peek-a-boo” and “Pat-a-Cake”. With younger toddlers with **Realistic** toys (e.g., life-sized like kitchen, workbench, house cleaning kit). Encourage them to imitate you. With older toddlers also include **Representational** toys (e.g., doll house, play garage). Act out familiar scenes. Provide **multi-sensory experiences** (e.g., Make a sensory bin with dry rice, dry beans, sand or water and the like. Create an **art center** with crayons, paints, paste & paper).

ENCOURAGE toddlers to repeat one to two phrases **from time to time**. Record them talk and let them listen. **GIVE** verbal praise for good talking and good behaviors in general.

Cueing Hierarchy to Foster Cognitive-Linguistic Growth



*Cue your child's language output in **little steps** *** Try not to talk for them
*** Try to pause...after you ask them something *** Silence is not a bad thing

*If you can't understand what they say, try to guess from the context *** Model likely targets for them *** Give limited options for response (e.g., "Do you want an apple or a banana?")

*Use cloze-sentence format (i.e., **Start the phrase and let them finish**) (e.g., "You want the ...") *** They may say, "cookie".)

*If starting the phrase doesn't work give them **Sound Cues** *** First say just the **first sound** then pause...to let them answer. If they give no response then say the **first + second** sound then pause...and so on...(e.g., "You want the "c"...wait for response, "coo"...wait for response, "cook"...wait for response...then give them the whole model, "cookie").

Is Your Child On Target?



- If you suspect a problem with your child's speech & language development talk to a **speech-language pathologist**
- Call your local Department of Education District (DOE) or Early Intervention (EI) Agency
 - Free Services
- Your pediatrician...Your child's teacher
 - Can be a referral source
 - Has expertise in medicine & teaching, NOT development
 - Their advice may be spot on
 - May advise you to wait incorrectly unknowingly
- The longer you wait the bigger a problem will grow, the more difficult a problem is to change and the more therapy is needed.
- The earlier you start the less therapy is generally needed
- Listen to you gut
- Educate yourself

