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***Preschool English Learners: Principles and Practices to Promote Language, Literacy, and Learning—A Resource Guide (Second Edition)***

**Chapter 5: Stages and Strategies in Second Language Acquisition**



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## Partners in Early Learning

The California Department of Education (CDE) was given the authority in the 2021 Budget Bill to revise the Preschool Learning Foundations which will now be known as the *California Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations (PTKLF)*. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is developing implementation materials and professional development. This partnership benefits all children regardless of funding sources.



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## Felt Board Story



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## Training Outcomes

- Become familiar with the English language development foundations for listening and speaking.
- Discuss the stages of second language development for listening and speaking.
- Describe teaching strategies to support children's second language development in listening and speaking.

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## Diversity in English Language Development

- Children who are beginning to experience English may spend a period of time observing others around them.
- Even if they are not yet communicating in their new language environment, children learn through observation and other forms of active participation.



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## Various Ways of Communicating

Children express their thoughts through language, including spoken language, signed language, gestures, writing, pictures, and other augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices.

Writing is an area of significant growth between preschool and third grade. In early childhood settings, children learn pre-writing and dictate ideas to be written by an adult; in the early grades, children begin to write their own thoughts and ideas.



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## Multilingual Learners

Multilingual learners come to the classroom with a vocabulary foundation in their home language, which can contribute to their growth and development in English.



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## Definitions: Language Learning

- Second language acquisition is the process that a child goes through in learning more than one language.
- Learning to understand and use language is a gradual and ongoing process that begins at birth and continues through the early childhood years and beyond.

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## Second Language Acquisition at Age Three or Later



- Home language stage
- Observational/listening stage
- Telegraphic/formulaic speech stage
- Fluid language use stage

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## Home Language Stage



- May use home language with others
- Will eventually only use home language with others who also speak it
- May ultimately stop using home language

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## Observational/Listening Stage



- Follows home language stage
- Observes others
- Tries to connect language with what's happening
- May be quiet when others are not speaking the home language

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## Telegraphic/Formulaic Speech Stage



- **Uses familiar word chunks, such as:**
  - “Go \_\_\_\_” (“Go up” or “Go mommy”)
  - “Gimme \_\_\_\_,” (“Gimme book” or “Gimme juice”)

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## Fluid Language Use



- **Understands English language rules**
- **Uses English more creatively**
- **Uses social and academic English**

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## Snapshots of Children

- **Number off from 1-3.**
- **Reconvene in number-alike groups.**
- **Refer to Handout 5A: Descriptions of the Stages of Second Language Acquisition.**
- **Use the snapshot that corresponds to your number.**

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## Snapshots of Children (continued)

- Review the assigned snapshot.
- Discuss the various stages of language acquisition in relation to the child described in the snapshot. (five minutes)
  - Use Handout 5A as a resource.
- Come to a consensus on which stage(s) of second language acquisition most appropriately describe(s) the child in the snapshot. (two minutes)
- Reconvene as a whole group to share your impressions.

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## Keep in Mind . . .

A child may appear to be in one or more of these stages depending on:

- Context
- Communication partners
- Language scaffolds available to them
- Opportunities provided by the teacher

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## Focus on Fluid Language Use

### Social English

- Used in relaxed interactions with peers and adults.

### Academic English

- Used in many school activities and lessons.

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## Social English



- Relies mostly on spoken language using short, simple sentences
- May mislead teachers/ adults to think that the child is ready to learn and comprehend new concepts in the second language

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## Examples of Social English

- Laura is talking with her friend Brianna outside during free play. Laura is telling Brianna to be the “baby” and that she will be the “mommy.”
- The teacher asks Juan what he did with his family on the weekend. Juan tells him about their trip to the beach.

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## Academic English: The Language of School



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## Academic English



- Is used in many school activities and lessons
- Requires written and spoken language, bigger and more complex vocabulary, etc.
- Often offers fewer context clues for the child to grasp meaning

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## Examples of Academic English

- Maximillian describes the pattern he has created with pattern blocks to his teacher.
- Ms. Delgado reads a book to the class. Luz Isabel retells the story prompted by the teacher's questions about the characters.

The goal is for children to perform in all four of the language skills addressed in school: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

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## Connections to "Principles and Practices"

- Principle 4: Language development and learning are promoted when preschool teachers and children creatively and interactively use language.
- Principle 5: Experimenting with the use, form, purpose, and intent of the first and second languages leads to growth in acquiring the second language.
- Principle 6: Continued use and development of the child's home language will benefit the child as he or she acquires English.

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## Promote Learning through Routines and Interactions

- **Encourage the use of home languages through everyday routines.**

- For example, allow children to use their home languages while retelling, during play and other activities, and while interacting with another child who speaks the same language.



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## Setting Up the Environment for Success: Label and Provide Books!

- **Foster literacy development by:**

- Labeling areas of the classroom (such as shelves, bins, and play areas) with the children's home language
- Providing and reading books that reflect children's diverse cultures, family structures, and home languages



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## Setting Up the Environment for Success: Create Spaces!

- **Foster literacy development by:**

- Setting up cozy areas, indoors and outdoors, with a variety of books and comfortable mats for children to read
- Providing books in multiple languages to honor and support the home languages



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## Summary



**Provide a comfortable and welcoming environment that allows for language experimentation and the acceptance of children's efforts to communicate.**

Source: CA Preschool Curriculum Framework, Vol. 1, p. 196

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## Responding to the Cognitive Strategies Used by Children

- Turn to pages 52-53 in the PEL Resource Guide.
- Create A and B pairs:
  - “A” pairs read Cognitive Strategies
  - “B” pairs read Teaching Tips
- Discuss: What did you notice? What strategies do you use most frequently? Which were new? How might these strategies be helpful?

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## Key Points

- Second language acquisition is a complex process.
- Children move through four stages of second language acquisition: home language, observational/listening, telegraphic/formulaic, and fluid language use.
- A child may appear to be in one or more of the four stages at any given point in time, depending on several factors.

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## Key Points (continued)

- Language development and learning are shaped by children's experiences.
- Remember to celebrate children's attempts at using a new language and, at the same time, model correct grammar and vocabulary in English.

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Thank  
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