



Developmental Training Programmes

Language



Child Assessment Services



DH

I. The main factors affecting language development are:

1. Learning motivation:

Each child's development is unique while the pace of development is closely related to his learning motivation. If a child is curious about the environment and likes to pay attention to other's facial expressions and movements, his motivation for learning will be greater than another child who is more passive and not interested in playing with age-appropriate toys. Children with strong learning motivation will learn language better.

2. Attention:

Children can communicate with others through sounds, facial expressions and gestures before they can speak. For example, they seek family member's attention actively and they respond by following others gaze and point as they exhibit joint attention. Attention is very important for children's learning. For example, they can focus when playing with others, read with parents patiently or be attentive in class.

3. Environmental factors:

Some children are taken care by their families without the need to express their needs. For instance, some children often watch VCD/DVDs or mobile phones and have fun. However, if the child lives in an environment that does not require communication and interaction with his family for a long time, the chance of learning the language is greatly reduced. Studies

have pointed out that if children only learn vocabulary by watching videos, they cannot improve their verbal comprehension and expression. Prolonged screen time will also hinder the development of children's language, concentration and social communication.

4. Hearing ability:

Children learn language through listening. If one's hearing is impaired, language development and pronunciation are affected.

II. Language development:

1. Language comprehension:

Language comprehension means that the child understands what it means. Parents are encouraged to describe things around their children in daily life, such as when they eat or play, they can introduce the food or how to play the games. The child's language comprehension ability can be gradually improved.

2. Language expression:

Language expression means that children can express themselves in words. When the children are not yet able to speak or speak very few words, parents should not ignore children's communication with pointing, eye contact or sounds as these are the pre-verbal skills that children communicate at the time.

III. Methods to encourage children to speak:

1. Improve concentration:

Concentration is necessary for learning things. The following are some ways to draw children's attention:

i. Voice:

When calling your children 's name, you can use exaggerated tone and use the sound of the toy/object to attract their attention.

ii. Vision:

When talking to your children, face to face; parents can also put their favorite toys next to their face, so that they will look at the person who is speaking.

iii. Touch:

When your children are not paying attention, parents can tap them or hold their hands and instruct them what to do. These tips are very helpful for children who are weak in language comprehension or inattentive.

iv. Environment:

A quiet environment with minimal distraction helps your children be more focused on the conversation.

2. Following interests:

When parents play with their children, they need to follow children's interests rather than their own interests or playing method. If children find it interesting, they are willing to stay focus and play for a longer time. Family members can make good use of this opportunity to talk to the children about what they are doing and let them listen to it repeatedly, which makes it easier for them to understand and remember. Conversely, if the game you play is not interesting to the child, no matter what you say, the child may not response.

3. Talk about what is happening:

No matter whether the children can express in words, parents should talk to them more. You can use simple words to describe or repeat key words, and even use interesting sounds to attract children, such as "oh, oh", "bang", etc. to encourage children to imitate. Parents should describe what is happening in front of them, for instance, what everyone is doing/seeing at the time. After parents' verbal description, they will understand and imitate the speech more easily.

4. Verbalize child's need:

This technique is very important. If your children do not speak, parents can use simple words to express for them it cannot only serve as a language demonstration, but also reduce your children's tantrums because of their difficulty in expressing themselves. Here are some tips:

i. Observe more:

Parents should observe what their children are playing, what they need and what they want.

ii. Listen more:

Parents should pay attention to the sounds made by their children, perhaps they are trying to express certain meanings.

iii. Response more:

Parents should take the opportunity to respond to topics that the children are interested in or expand the content of the speech and teach them to express clearly. If they do not speak a word, parents can also describe the toys in their hands or what they are doing. Parents can encourage them to imitate gestures and speak in simple words, for example, reaching out to say "Give", thumbs up to say "Good".

iv. Try more:

Parents should encourage their children to try more and give enough time for children to respond; on the other hand, parents should continue to observe, listen, and use words to respond to their children. The above steps need to be repeated continuously.

5. Self-Question and Answer:

When parents ask questions to their children, no matter they answer with words, gestures or expressions, parents can demonstrate the answer in words according to their children's language ability. This technique is called "Self-Question and Answer." This is also one kind of language demonstrations. Avoid asking questions to test children's cognitive ability, for example: What color is this? How many are there? If parents just focus on testing their children regularly, parent-child communication becomes a boring exam.

6. Extended content:

If your children can speak more gradually, parents can extend the content of what they have said in longer phases. For example, if the child says: "Give", parents can expand and say: "Give biscuit", "Give again", "Give more", "Mama gives", "Mama give Jun Jun", etc. Children can learn new sentences and new vocabulary by listening to more language demonstrations.

7. Grasp the opportunity:

Parents can use various activities in daily life to guide children to learn to speak. For example, when children are tidying up toys, parents could describe what they are doing. Through activities and repeated explanations, children can learn commonly used words quickly. Parents should give them time to respond and express in daily life. Parents can also deliberately create opportunities for their children to seek help from others proactively. For example, if parents give their children a new toy, but deliberately do not open the lid, their children need to express themselves to find someone to help. In addition, parents can respond promptly in some unexpected situations, such as when they spill a drink or hear the siren of an ambulance, just by saying relevant description immediately, children will understand and grasp it more easily.

8. Praise:

There are many ways to praise children, verbal commendation is one of them. "Well done, you have said it clearly" "Your voice is nice" etc. Parents can also nod to show their appreciation. If parents can respond to children immediately, they can realize that when they express clearly, the others can understand better and they can get what they want easily.

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