

Module 7:

Early Childhood Language

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Early Childhood Language

7.1 Some Goals

- a) To identify the common forms of communication and explain which are most useful.
- b) To know what the pre speech forms of communication are and why they are essential.
- c) To understand the four tasks, a child must master to be able to although the words speech and communication are often used as if they I meant the same thing, their meanings are actually somewhat different.

Communication is an interchange of thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Speech I is the expression of thoughts, feelings, and emotions, in words said aloud. It does I not mean that the person who heard these words must understand them.

There are two essentials in communication. First the person trying communicate something by sending a message must be able to put thoughts or I feelings in a form that can be understood. Secondly person receiving the message seeing or hearing it must understand what is meant. If not, communication has n taken place.

For example, a baby who is hungry and wants others to know will try I communicate the need for food in any way possible. A baby who is very young communicates only by crying. However, if the communication is to serve its purpose, those who take care of the baby must be able to understand what the city means. If not, it will communicate nothing.

7.1.1 Communication

Speech is by no means the only form of communication people use, but it is the best form for many purpose, within a group of people who speak the same language speech is more widely understood than any other means of communication. Of those different forms, the ones that can be best understood, and that are most widely used, are gestures, face and body movements that show different emotions, touch such as picking up a baby, sign language, as used by the deaf arts, such as music, dance, and painting, and written symbols for words. All these forms of communication can be thought of as language. Speech is just one form of language.

Learning to speak is one of the hardest skills person must master, there are W reasons for this. First, in order to speak a person must be able to control the voice mechanism as well as the muscles of the tongue and lips. All must work together; make sounds that have meaningful words. Second, the speaker must km meaning of the words used if they are to communicate what is meant.

Note: When adults communicate with a baby, they often used gestures and emotional expressions to catch the baby's attention. The baby is able to respond to such communication at a very early age.

7.1.2 Understanding: The first task in communication is understanding other's messages.

Babies must learn how to understand what is communicated to them by others through gesture, touch, facial expressions, or words. Babies and young children learn to understand more words than they can say. Thus their comprehension vocabulary is larger than their speech vocabulary.

At first, the words babies hear are meaningless to them, some time they get an idea of what is being said by watching the face of the speaker. A smile, for example, means approval, and an angry look means disapproval. Understanding the meanings of expressions and gestures begins around the age of 3 months.

By the time most babies are 6 months old, they know their own names. By the time they are 1 years old they can understand the meaning of such single question as 'are you hungry?' or 'are you sleepy?' By the end of babyhood, the toddler should understand such simple commands as 'come to dinner', 'throw me the ball' etc.

If a good ground work is laid in babyhood, the young child will make rapid strides in understanding what others are trying to say. The baby must be taught to understand meanings. Babies will learn some of it by trial and error. But trial and error learning is slow and indirect.

Because learning the meaning of word is a long, slow process. Communications to a baby must be done first through facial expression gestures and touch. Words should accompany these expression. Then gradually, the baby will come to connect the words with the experience.

7.1.3 Aids in learning to understand

Try to get the baby's attention when you speak by using facial expression or gesture, if the baby does not look at you, the connection between your words and your expressions or gesture will likely be lost.

Be sure that your form of communication is simple, yet meaningful. Words of approval and pleasure can be strengthened with smile. Try to speak clearly.

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