



Quality ChildCare

For Registered Home-Based Providers

LEARNING TO GROW ★ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Vol. IV, No. 5

10 Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

- ★ Build trusting relationships
- ★ Provide consistent care
- ★ Support children's health
- ★ Provide a safe environment
- ★ Provide positive guidance
- ★ Provide a language-rich environment
- ★ **Foster curiosity and development through play**
- ★ Individualize care and learning activities
- ★ Partner with parents
- ★ Pursue personal and professional growth

This Month's Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

Foster Curiosity and Development through Play

Early Language Exposure: Closing the *30 Million Words Gap*

Years of research have revealed a link between young children's exposure to oral language and their future academic success. When researchers looked at families with young children they found that "no matter what a family's economic or social situation, the more the parents engaged in daily conversations with their children, the more rapidly the children's vocabularies grew." (Hart & Risley, 1999) When these children entered the school system, their reading, writing and academic performance soared above those of children from less verbal households.

Studies have also found that there are vast differences in the amount of talk a child hears in households across our country. Children born into poverty hear 30 million fewer words by the age of three, as compared to children who are born into more affluent circumstances. It is crucial that we find ways to close this gap and give all children – no matter their economic background – the opportunity to be exposed to frequent and descriptive language.

What can we do?

- Purposefully and intentionally talk to and engage children in conversation.
- Provide children with books, songs, oral stories and games that promote language.
- Share this information with families so that they will know the powerful impact that talking to their child can have on his future academic success.

This newsletter will focus on the "*Three T's*", three steps for ensuring a language-rich environment, adapted from University of Chicago's "*Thirty Million Words Initiative*." Watch the YouTube video cited on Page 4 for an explanation of why it is so important to:

- **Tune in**
- **Talk more**
- **Take turns.**



Tune in.

Be present and in the moment. Tune in to what the child is doing, looking at, or saying.

Try this:

- Notice what the child is focused on. What is he looking at? What is he doing? What is he saying? Talk about that.
- Listen and respond when the child communicates; including when a baby cries or coos.

Talk more.

The more we talk, the more words we use, which leads to the child hearing more words. As he hears more descriptive words, his vocabulary grows, leading to a greater chance that he will do better in school.

Try this:

- Talk about day-to-day routines, such as diaper changing, tooth brushing and grocery shopping.
- Include details; use descriptive vocabulary, including rare or uncommon words.
- Practice different types of talk (see the following table which shows examples of the kind of talk we can use with young children).



Practice	Description	Example
Use self-talk	Talk about what you are seeing, hearing or doing.	"I am changing your diaper. I am holding your legs up and wiping your bottom with a baby wipe."
	Make comments about your day.	"It's raining! I am going to close the windows so the rain doesn't get the furniture wet."
Use parallel-talk	Talk about what <i>the child</i> is seeing, hearing or doing.	"You are looking at the ceiling fan. It's going round and round and spinning fast."
Use descriptive talk	Describe an object the child is looking at or playing with.	"You are holding the red ball. It is soft and squishy, and bounces when you throw it."
Use "time sequence" talk	Talk about the sequence of events by using words such as, "first, next, now, last, etc."	"First we took out the paints and paintbrush. Next you put water in the cup. Now you are painting a picture."
Use rich vocabulary	Use rare words that a child may not ordinarily hear.	Instead of saying: "The blocks fell." Say: "The tower collapsed!"



Take Turns.

Taking turns when communicating is a basic function of conversation. This interaction between an adult and child, also known as serve-and-return interactions, is like a game of tennis. For example, the child points to something, makes a sound, or speaks -- and the adult “returns the serve” by noticing and responding. This process is important for language development and also essential for the wiring of the brain, especially in the early years.

Try this:

- Respond to the child’s sounds, gestures and words, and give him time to respond to you.
- Keep the conversation going.

The following table lists specific examples of strategies to promote serve-and-return interactions.

Practice	Description	Example
Respond to the child’s sounds and gestures	View baby as a conversation partner from day one and respond to every coo, gesture, burp, etc.	Baby: [burp] Adult: “I heard a burp! It was a loud burp. Do you feel better now?”
Repeat and expand	Repeat the words the child says and add a little more.	Child: “Car go!” Adult: “Yes! The car is going fast” Child: “I make fast.” Adult: “You made it go faster!”

Repeat, question and share personal experiences	Take the words the child says and repeat them, then ask a related question, and/or share about a personal experience.	Child: “I went to the zoo!” Adult: “You went to the zoo yesterday? What animals did you see?” Child: “I saw a monkey.” Adult: “Ooh, monkeys are fun to watch. I once saw a white monkey swing on a tree branch.”
Ask open-ended questions and build on the child’s response	Ask questions that require more than just one or two word answers and can allow for multiple ways to answer/explain. Then, reflect on the child’s answer and comment or ask another question.	“What do you think will happen if...?” “Can you explain why?” “Can you think of a new way to do it?” “That’s a great idea! Let’s see what happens when you try it!”
Answer your child’s questions	Listen for any question the child may ask, and provide a prompt response.	If you know the answer respond with the answer. For example, “Yes, we did see that at Tutu’s house yesterday.” If you don’t know the answer say: “Good question. Let’s go find out together!”





Citations:

Hart, Betty, and Risley, Todd R. 2003. "The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3." *American Educator* 4–9. Retrieved from: <https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/TheEarlyCatastrophe.pdf>

Video: Talk to Your Baby – The Foundation for Learning. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXQBU9gEi0g>

Video: Thirty Million Words Initiative, The University of Chicago. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7qESE2GeZxo>

Training Certificates, Book Awards, Technical Support

- **Certificates.** Providers who return reflection sheets will receive a certificate for one hour of professional development completed. These certificates will be aligned with the Attitudes, Skills, & Knowledge (ASK) Core Areas, which are recognized by the Hawaii State Department of Human Services to support improvement of quality in early childhood programs. There is no specific due date required to earn this certificate but please note: **the reflection sheet must be completed in full and you must thoughtfully answer question # 5 on the reflection sheet in order to earn the certificate.**
- **Free books.** Free children's books will continue to be given for reflection sheets returned by the posted due date. However, if there are any additional books left over, they will be given to the providers who submit the reflection sheets past the due date. These books will be awarded on a first come, first served basis until the supply runs out.
- **Free technical assistance and support** related to child care issues can be requested by answering question #8 on the reflection sheet.



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