

Responding to Children in Various Stages of Learning a Second Language, Part I

The following strategies serve as a guide to teachers in providing different options for responding to children as they move in and out of the different stages of learning a second language.

Teacher Support Strategy	Stage of Learning a Second Language			
	Home Language Stage	Observational/Listening Stage	Telegraphic and Formulaic Stage	Fluid Use of Second Language Stage
Start With What the Child Knows: Use a few words in the child's home language (come, bathroom, eat) to allow for low-level communication.	✓	✓		
Start Slowly: Allow child to become familiar with the classroom situation before approaching her with questions and directives in English.	✓	✓		
Scaffold Communication: Combine words with some type of gesture, action, or directed gaze.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Provide Safe Havens: Allow child to regain energy and focus by providing spaces and activities in which the child can participate with few, if any, expectations for verbal communication.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Get Help From the English-Speaking Children: Show the child's peers ways to communicate and ask questions in order to encourage interaction and provide additional language models.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Expand and Extend: Start with what the child already knows and go from there. If the child says, "Car," the teacher can reply, "That is a red car."			✓	✓

Responding to Children in Various Stages of Learning a Second Language, Part II

Teacher Support Strategy	Stage of Learning a Second Language			
	Home Language Stage	Teacher Support Strategy	Home Language Stage	Teacher Support Strategy
Raise Expectations: Request a verbal response from the child rather than only a gesture when he shows signs of readiness to talk.			✓	✓
Use Repetition: Say the same thing more than once to give the child an opportunity to understand what is being said.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Talk About the Here and Now: Refer to the present situation to allow child to understand the context of communication.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fine Tuning: Restate the message in a form that the child can understand when she at first seems not to understand.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Offer Consistent Routines: Help the child quickly learn where to go and what to expect so that he can become a member of the group.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ensure Inclusion: Use the child's name to invite her to participate in small group activities.	✓	✓	✓	✓

Adapted from:

Tabors, P. (1997). One child, two languages: A guide for preschool educators of children learning English as a second language. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.