

Focus Group Discussion Guide

Moderator: After presentation of each topic area/prompt, ask “what do you think about this strategy?”

I. Participants in Interventions:

- Mostly, mothers are the focus of interventions that support language development. Fathers, other children, and extended family don’t generally participate.
- **Possible Prompt:** Include all family members who care for the child in strategies to support language development.

II. Settings in Interventions:

- Many times, caregivers are taught strategies for supporting language in their homes by teachers who come to visit. Sometimes, caregivers are brought to a clinic or to their child’s educational center to learn these strategies.

III. Activities in Interventions:

- **Adult-Child Play:** Many times, adult caregivers are encouraged to play with their child to support language development. For example, pretending with dolls or building blocks.
 - **Possible Prompt:** Activities besides play should be used to support language development. These could include when the child is helping with household chores or when the child is receiving care, such as diaper changes or baths.
- **Shared Book-Reading:** Many times, adult caregivers are encouraged to read storybooks with their child to support language development.
 - **Possible Prompt:** Caregiver should tell stories to support language development. Caregivers could also show photo albums, magazines, newspapers, or other materials to children instead of books. Caregivers could create their own books as well.

IV. Strategies in Interventions:

- **Follow the Child’s Lead:** Caregivers are often told to follow the child’s lead. This means, doing whatever the child wants to do. The child has control in choosing the activities, toys, foods he/she wants, and the adult should play along.
 - **Possible Prompt:** The caregiver maintains control over the activity by providing a limited number of choices of activities or materials from which the child can

choose. The child is still able to make some decisions but does not have total control.

- **Imitating the Child:** Caregivers should imitate what the child says or does. This includes imitating sounds the child makes or words and sentences the child says even if these are not accurate.
- **Equal Conversational Turns:** Caregivers should take equal turns in conversation with the child. In other words, the child should speak just as much as the caregiver because they are equal partners in conversation.
- **Linguistic Mapping:** Caregivers should narrate what they are doing so that the child has an example of what he/she could say in certain activities.
- **Ask Open-Ended Questions:** Whenever the child is talking, the caregiver should ask many open-ended questions to encourage the child to continue to talk. For example, “what did you do at school today?”, “what was your favorite game?”, “who were you playing with?”. These kinds of questions should be asked instead of questions easily answered with a yes or no, such as “did you have fun at school today?”
- **Materials Out of Reach:** Children’s toys or other materials that children might want with should be out of their reach so that they have to ask a caregiver to get these items. For example, when eating a banana, the caregiver should only give small pieces and hold on to the rest of the banana so that the child has to ask for more banana each time he/she wants another bite.
- **Limiting Television:** The time that children spend in front of the television should be very limited because television does not support the development of language. Also, the television programs that a child watches should be made for children and educational.
 - **Possible Prompt:** Caregivers should talk with the child about the television program while he/she is watching.
- **Praise:** Children should be praised often for their communication and actions.
- **Expansion:** When children say something, caregivers should repeat with the child said and add words to provide an expanded example of what the child could say in the future.
- **Increase Quantity of Talk:** Commonly, caregivers are encouraged simply to talk more with their child. In other words, caregivers should be talking to their child in every activity throughout the day. Caregivers should be telling the child what he or she is seeing and experiencing, asking questions, and commenting on what the child says as much of the day as possible.

- **Possible prompt:** Specific activities should be targeted for increasing the talk between the caregiver and the child. It is not possible to talk to the child all day long.
- **Teach Preacademics:** Caregivers should teach the child colors, letters, shapes, and numbers.

V. **Languages of Interventions:**

- Many times, strategies are only given in one language (Spanish or English).
 - **Possible Prompt:** Strategies should be given in both Spanish and English.