

The Importance of Early Language Development and Screening: Part I

Watch the video of Dr. Todd Risley summarizing findings from his three-year study on family-child verbal interactions and their correlation with student outcomes. The video is available at the following URL: <http://www.childrenofthecode.org/Tour/c3b/differences.htm>

1. Individually list and then discuss three important points from the study conducted by Dr. Todd Risley on meaningful differences in everyday experiences of children.

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2. What implication does this have for schools and teachers as children walk into kindergarten for the first time?

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The Importance of Early Language Development and Screening: Part II

Discuss the following questions related to finding and using an oral language screening tool for kindergarten students within your district or school.

1. What screening assessment does your school currently use to identify students who may need additional support in the area of language development?
2. What particular skills does this screening tool assess?
3. Look at the Sample Oral Language Screening Tool on the following pages. Is this a possible tool you could use as a “first screen” for students who may need direct instruction with oral language development?
4. Do you need to create a plan for obtaining a screening assessment for language? What steps will you need to take in order to obtain a valid and reliable instrument as well as integrate this assessment into your schoolwide assessment plan?

Sample Kindergarten Oral Language Screener

Materials: Two cups, one large and one small, and a pencil.

Criteria: Students who have 4 or more incorrect responses are highly likely to have limited language development.

1. (Put the two cups on a table in front of the child. Point to cups and say,) **“These are cups. Say that.”**

If student does not say the sentence correctly verbatim, repeat the sentence and directions another time.

- Acceptable answer is the student saying the sentence with exact words. Count item as incorrect if student does not say sentence correctly on either trial.

2. (Point to the cups and ask,) **“Are these cups?”**

- Acceptable answer is “yes or “yeh.” If student says “cups,” repeat question. If student does not say yes on either trial, count response as incorrect.

3. (Say to the student,) **“Touch the cup that is not big.”**

- Acceptable answer is student touching the small cup. If student does not touch small cup, count response as incorrect.

4. (Point to the small cup and say,) **“This cup is not big. Say that.”**

- Acceptable answer is the student saying, “This cup is not big” or “The cup is not big.” If student does not say the sentence correctly, repeat the sentence and directions another time. Count item as incorrect if student does not say sentence correctly on either trial.

5. Give the child a pencil and say, **“Put the pencil on the small cup.”**

- Acceptable answer is the student putting the pencil on the small cup.

6. (Put the pencil on the big cup. Point to the pencil on the big cup and say,) **“The pencil is on the big cup. Say that.”**

- Acceptable answer is the student saying the sentence verbatim. If the student does not say the sentence correctly verbatim, repeat the sentence and directions another time. Count item as incorrect if student does not say sentence correctly on either trial.

7. (Put the pencil under the big cup. Point to the pencil and ask,) **“Where is the pencil?”**

- Acceptable answer is the student saying, “Under the big cup” or “Under the cup.”

8. (Say to the student,) **“Watch what I do.”** (Clap your hands twice, then touch your nose, then put hand down and ask student, **“What did I do first?”**

- Acceptable answers are clap or clap your hands.

9. (Say to the student,) **“What did I do next?”**

- Acceptable answers is touch nose or touch your nose.

10. **What’s your whole name?**

- Acceptable answer is student saying at least first and last name. If student says just first name, repeat the question one time.

Sample First Grade Oral Language Screener

Criteria: First Grade: First grade students who answer 4 or more items incorrectly most likely have very limited language development.

Kindergarten: Administer only to students who answered 6 or more items correctly on the kindergarten language screening test. The first grade screening can be used to obtain further information about a student’s relative language development.

(Say to students,) **“I’m going to say a sentence. Then I’ll ask you some questions. Listen. A little cat slept in the park yesterday. Listen again. A little cat slept in the park yesterday.”**

1. (Ask the child,) **“What kind of cat slept in the park?”**

- Acceptable answer is little or a little cat.

2. (Ask the child,) **“Where did the cat sleep?”**

- Acceptable answer is in the park.

3. (Ask the child,) **“When did the cat sleep in the park?”**

- Acceptable answer is yesterday.

4. **“New question. Tell me how a horse and a cow are the same?”**

- Accept any reasonable response.

5. **“Tell me how a mouse and an elephant are different.”**

- Accept any reasonable response.

6. **“Listen, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. Say that.”**

(Repeat the days once if the student did not say them correctly. If the student does not say the days correctly on either trial, count the item as incorrect.)

7. **“Listen, Jimmy walked to school on Monday morning. Say that sentence.”**

- Acceptable answer is the student saying the sentence verbatim. If student does not say the sentence correctly verbatim, repeat the sentence and directions another time. Count item as incorrect if student does not say sentence correctly on either trial.

8. **“Listen. Which of these animals cannot be a pet: A dog, an elephant, a cat.”**

- Acceptable answer is an elephant.

9. **“Listen. Name three kinds of clothing.”**

- Acceptable answer is any reasonable response.

10. **“What is a person who fixes your teeth called?”**

- Acceptable answer is a dentist.