

Transcript of Let's Talk: Communication Development in Young Children

Allyson Fulton: Good morning. I am Allyson Fulton, Coordinator with the Pennsylvania Family Support Team based at the Center for Schools and Communities. I will be your moderator for today. It is my pleasure to welcome you to today's webinar session. Let's Talk: Communication Development in Young Children. Our presenter today is Susan Althouse. Sue is a speech and language pathologist currently working as an early intervention technical assistant for Tuscarora IU 11. As such, she provides direct support to several early intervention pre-school programs. She is also the lead early intervention technical assistant consultant for the Early Language and Literacy State-wide Initiative.

Sue began her career as a speech and language pathologist in the medical arena and worked in in-patient, out-patient and rehabilitation settings for many, many years including several years as the Director of a hospital speech and hearing program. The better part of her career has been spent in early intervention with pre-school aged children. In addition to working as a speech and language pathologist and service coordinator, Sue also supervised a pre-school early intervention program for several years. Human services is a notable career path in her family. Her husband is a blind, low-vision rehabilitation specialist.

Her youngest of three children is a physical therapist. Her middle child and adopted daughter is on the autism spectrum. As such, she has learned not only the patience and dedication required of parents of children with disabilities but the tremendous blessings as well. It is my pleasure to welcome Sue this morning. Please be patient while I pass the presenter privileges on to her. Sue, thank you for joining us and the microphone is now yours.

Sue Althouse: Good morning, everyone. This is Sue Althouse. Today, we'll be delving into the topic of communication and language development in young children. This is one of my favorite topics. I'm particularly glad that you are interested in learning more about it. As the title suggests, let's talk about communication development in young children. Communication, language and speech are the three most common terms we use when we discuss children learning to talk. Is there a difference? What do you think? Let's take a poll. Here are your choices. Communication, language and speech mean the same thing and can be used interchangeably. Language and speech mean the same thing. Communication, language and speech all have different meanings.

Four, you have no clue. Please select one and we'll see what folks think the difference is or similarities may be between communication, language and speech. Okay. We have a lot of responses coming in. All right. Even though we have some folks who really have no clue at this point, I guarantee you. You will have a clue by the time we are finished this morning. If you chose communication, language and speech all have different meanings, you selected

the correct answer. Though we often use them interchangeably, communication, language and speech have different meanings. We're going to spend time this morning talking about the interrelatedness but distinct differences between these terms.

Let's take a quick look at what we'll be covering today. We will start by discussing the terms communication, language and speech as I've just promised you. We will also talk about the term, communication intent. We will discuss expressive and receptive language development, speech sound development, red flags to help you know when communication skills may not be on target. Strategies to help support communication development for both you and families and finally, strategies for talking with families about concerns. As noted, we often use the terms communication, language and speech interchangeably. When in fact, they do have distinctly different meanings.

Let's start by getting on the same page about what these terms mean. This diagram shows the interrelationship between communication, language and speech. Communication is the broad term we use to describe all kinds of messages we send to share information. These messages can be sent both non-verbally like through pointing, reaching, crying, smiling or verbally, spoken words, signed words, printed words, etc. When you think of communication, I want you to think of sharing information. Let's look at the green circle. Language is a type of communication. When you think of language, think about words, language includes the understanding and use of words.

Languages have rules about word order and how to change and use words. For instance, in English, we say, "big dog," not "dog big" or we say, "He is running," not "He run." The last item in this communication diagram is speech. Speech refers to the sounds that we use to combine and produce words. We use the sounds, "duh", "oh", and "guh" to form the word, dog. There are also rules about how we combine sounds. For instance, in our language, G and R go together to form a blend like in green. There are sounds that we don't combine to form blends such as G and B for instance. Let's give it a try. Let's look at this first question here. Using the words "mommy" and "go" to say "mommy go" is an example of speech, language or you're not sure?

Let's take a look. All right. For those of you who selected language, that is correct. Using the words, "mommy" and "go" is an example of language. Remember that language is all about words. In this particular case, a child will be combining the words mommy and the word go to say, "Mommy go." Let's look at another one. A baby's smile is an example of speech, language or communication? What do you think? All right, folks. I apologize. We just realized that we had a little bit of a mix up there. A baby's smile, you didn't have the right choice there for you. For those of you who picked language, you were probably the closest. A baby's smile is an example of communication. I apologize that you didn't have that choice.

A smile would be a non-verbal form of communication. It's not language because it's not a word and it's not speech because it doesn't involve sounds. It would be a form of communication. Okay. Sorry. We didn't catch that. Let's look at the next one. All right. Here we go, folks. All right. Combining the sounds "s" + "ah" + "k" to form the word, "sock" would be an example of speech, language or you're not sure? In here, we do have the right choices. All right. Very good, folks. Yes. Combining sounds to form words is an example of speech. Speech is all about the sound system. Okay. Let's move on to talk about communication intent. There is one more important area of communication we should talk about.

That aspect of communication is called communication intent. The technical term for communication intent is pragmatics or you may hear the term, social language. This aspect of communication or language refers to why we are choosing to communicate our message. When a baby cries, they are communicating that they need attention. When a toddler reaches toward grandma, he or she is probably requesting to be picked up. When a young child says, "My ball," he or she is informing you that the ball belongs to them or at least they think so. When a baby pinches their lips and turns their head, they're probably protesting mom's effort to feed them. In these examples, communication was used for a variety of different reasons. To gain attention, to make a request, to inform or to protest.

There are many other ways that we use our language as well. Understanding the intent or reason for a child's communication is particularly important for caregivers. We hear a great deal these days about children with behavioral issues. It is critical that caregivers understand that children's behaviors are a means of communication. Through their behaviors, children are trying to tell us something. It is helpful in the heat of the moment to remember that the child is communicating a message. We need to help children develop their communication skills, both their vocabulary and social language skills so they can learn overtime appropriate ways of gaining attention and communicating their wants and needs. This is a good time to quickly review before we forge ahead.

Remember that communication, language and speech are interrelated but separate terms. Communication refers to sending and receiving messages in a variety of ways. Language is about the use and understanding of words. Speech refers to the sounds that we combine to produce words. Additionally, an important aspect of communication is the intent or reason that we are communicating. The relationship between communication and behavior is also important for caregivers to understand. Now that we have learned some terms and gotten them straight, let's forge ahead into the area of communication known as language. Every language, English, German, sign language is a code with very specific rules. When we encode a message, it is termed expressive language. Expressive language refers to our ability to make our thoughts, wants and needs known to others through a code that is made up of words.

This happens in ways such as talking, signing or writing. An easy way to remember one aspect of expressive language development is to associate the child's age with the number of word combinations they should be using. During the child's first year, they are cooing and babbling but not yet using words. Around the child's first birthday, single words begin to appear such as mama, dada or bye-bye. Between one and two years of age, the child's single word vocabulary grows. By age two, most children are combining words that average two words in length. My ball, go bye-bye and so forth. By age three, children are combining an average of three or more words such as more crackers, please or in the box. At age four, four-word combinations are a typical average such as, here comes the truck or don't take my hat.

At age five, language has become so well-developed that typical sentences go way beyond an average of five words. For example, he has my favorite toy truck. It's in the blue box, not the red one, etc. Again, an easy way to remember the length of a child's utterances is to go by the chronological age. Another way to remember how expressive language developed is to talk about the types of language that are the focus of each age. For example, infancy is all about babbling. At age one, it's all about words. As vocabulary grows, age two becomes all about phrases and even short sentences start to emerge. Between three and four years, sentences are used frequently. This age is all about sentences. At age four, the complexity of children's language shows a marked increase and you begin to hear sentences such as, "I can call daddy and mommy. That's my book bag, not Johnny's."

At age five, children could carry on extensive conversations. For example, Tyler says, "Let's make cookies, okay?" You don't respond with, "Sure. We can do that. Then we can have cookies and milk." Tyler then says, "I don't like milk. Can I have chocolate milk instead?" To gain a better understanding let's take a deeper look into what is happening during each of these developmental age spans. During that magical first year, babies begin with those cute little baby noises, the coo's and goo's and grunts. Through interactions with others, they perfect their sounds and begin babbling. Eventually, babies experiment with even more sounds and string them together into complex babbling patterns. We're going to take a moment to look at a short video about sound development in infancy.

From birth to two months, we hear vowels, consonants, throaty sounds. They're also developing differentiated crying, which has two-fold importance. The first is, it lets us know that babies know that they need to communicate different needs.

Speaker 3: You want to eat something?

Sue Althouse: The second is that it helps parents figure out what's going on with baby. From birth, baby is already paying attention. This is the foundation for the development of speech sound. She's startling to loud noises. He recognizes it's your voice. He quiets and eventually smiles when you speak to him. There are increases or decreases in sucking behavior in response to new and different sounds, which is

why it's so very important that you speak to your baby. Research tells us babies need to hear their first words about 500 times before they say them. From two to three months, we have the goo state. In addition to all the other sounds, we start to hear the typical cooing and gooing.

Speaker 4: Yeah?

Sue Althouse: I mean, really want to hear these changes because it says to us that baby's hearing is okay. In here, she is starting to recognize the sounds of their language. Interestingly, babies are born with the ability to say all the sounds in all the languages, which is why it's so much easier to learn a foreign language when you're young. It's through hearing the specific sounds in their own language.

Speaker 5: Can you say hi to Danielle?

Sue Althouse: That they begin to shape their speech to that model. From four to six months is the expansion stage.

Speaker 5: Ma. Ma.

Sue Althouse: Babbling is starting to sound more speech-like with many different sounds including P, B and M. they're laughing. They're vocalizing their excitement and sometimes, their displeasure. Growling, trilling, squealing, speech is becoming a game as well as a way to communicate.

Okay. I hope you enjoyed that video and we will forge ahead here as soon as we get the next slide pulled up. There we go. As a baby's sound system expands through babbling and sound play with others, first words begin to emerge. By 18 months, most toddlers will have approximately 50 words and will add new words almost weekly. As they approach their second birthday, most toddlers will be combining two or more words together. Let's take a look at the language of a one and a half-year old. As you're watching, I'd like you to do two things. Write down or think of at least some of the words and word combinations that you hear and also, make note of what this little one seems to understand. Let's look at the next video here of a one and a half-year old child.

Speaker 6: How do you feel? How do you feel?

Isa: Happy.

Speaker 6: Happy. Isa, can you balance? Can you balance? Can you balance? Yeah, good balancing.

Isa: Hug a baby.

Speaker 6: Hug a baby? Isa, what does an elephant say?

Isa: Woo.

Speaker 6: Woo. That's very good. What does a cow say?

Isa: Moo.

Speaker 6: Moo. Who am I?

Isa: Mommy.

Speaker 6: Mommy. Who are you?

Isa: Baby.

Speaker 6: Baby. That's right. Isa, what's this?

Isa: Bubble. Bubble.

Speaker 6: Bubble. What's that right there that you're getting on. What's that? Isa, what's this?

Isa: Chair.

Speaker 6: Chair. Good. Are you getting on the chair? Yeah. You're getting on the chair? What's that?

Isa: Tum-tum.

Speaker 6: Tum-tum, yeah. Isa, Isa, where's your head? Where's your ears? Good. Where's your nose?

Sue Althouse: Okay. Quite a cutie. All right. We're going to move to the chat box and I'd like you to type into the chat box some of your words and word combinations that you heard this little one use. Let's see what folks remember from that short clip. I think the baby's name was Isa. What were some of the words and word combinations that Isa used?

Allyson Fulton: We have some coming in. Hug a baby, happy baby, tum-tum, chair, mom, new, the elephant noise, understanding of body parts, of mommy bubble.

Sue Althouse: Very good. That's great. That's great. Some of the things that she was saying, happy, hug a baby. We've gone from this babbling stage in under a year to a year and a half using all of these words and even she had a three-word combination there, hug a baby. Some of the things that she seemed to understand, she understood how do you feel. She understood the word, balance when mom said, "Isa, balance. Can you balance?" Then she finally got on that one foot, hold the other one up. She understood her name. She understood the question, what does blank say? In other words, what does a doggie say? What does a cow say and so forth. She understood the who question when mom said, "Who am I? Who are you?"

She understood what's that when she pointed to the chair. She was also able to point to some body parts. You can see that there's a significant growth in a child's language from that babbling phase to even just at a year and a half of age and what they're able to say and understand. At two, vocabulary develops at increasing speed. By two and a half, most children are consistently using phrases and short sentences that are two or more words in length. To talk about things in their environment such as, big doggie, my car. They also combine words to make requests such as, more juice or cracker, please or to protest. The famous two-year old use of the word, no. No sleep, no book, no bath, etc. their understanding of what they want far outweighs their language and emotional maturity. Resulting in what we often refer to as the terrible two's. Keep in mind that tantrums are a means of communication when children lack the language and emotional maturity to express themselves in more appropriate ways. As they approach their third birthday, word combinations are averaging three or more words. Children begin using word endings like plurals as in dogs, books and possessive markers like, mommy's hat. Simple verb endings like running, jumping. Let's take a minute to listen to a young two-year old. This one is just 24 months old. Let's see the types of things that she's saying.

Speaker 8: Friends?

Elle: Hey, friends.

Speaker 8: Color, Elle. What are you going to make?

Elle: Table.

Speaker 8: Table? Pretty. Nice green.

Elle: This is green.

Speaker 8: Yellow?

Elle: Yellow.

Speaker 8: Where's red?

Elle: That red.

Speaker 8: No. That's green.

Elle: Green. Green.

Speaker 8: Yup. Green.

Elle: Green.

Speaker 8: How about yellow?

Elle: That one.

Speaker 8: That one. That one's yellow and here is red.

Elle: That one.

Speaker 8: That one and here's blue.

Elle: That one.

Speaker 8: That one is blue.

Elle: Wow.

Speaker 8: Yellow.

Elle: That one.

Speaker 8: Here you go, yellow. Thank you.

Sue Althouse: Okay. As we're seeing, Elle is using word combinations. That one, that yellow, here red. You're seeing a lot of two-word combinations as you would expect in a young two-year old. Now notice in Elle's case, her speech isn't as clear as what we might think. Mom is understanding a good bit of what she's saying but some of the things are a little bit hard to understand. Often, as children begin combining words, their clarity of their speech that they have for single words gets compromised when they start pulling two words together. We'll talk a little bit of that a little more later about the speech sound system. Let's talk about three to four-year olds. At age three, a vocabulary explosion takes place.

Three-word combinations are common plays and children are often using sentences that are significantly longer in length due to their growing vocabulary. This vocabulary growth and grammatical skill development gives children a better means of communicating their wants and needs. Paired with increased social maturity, the tantrums of the terrible two's start to diminish. Their sentences start to sound more adult-like. For example, he run away becomes he is running away. I want cookie becomes I want cookies. Let's look at another video about three-year olds. My apologies in advance. The video does cut off a little too soon. The little boy at the end says, I think somebody take-d it instead of took it.

Speaker 10: After the age of two, there is a vocabulary explosion. Children learn words at an astronomical rate, acquiring more than 14,000 new words by the age of six. Many new words are very difficult for the child to pronounce, so children develop all kinds of strategies to simplify difficult words. Initial consonants may be dropped or replaced with less difficult forms.

Speaker 11: I'm free.

- Speaker 10: At the same time, children are developing this extensive vocabulary, they are also beginning to use grammatical morphemes or word endings that impart grammatical information such as possession, plurals and tense. As children begin to use new word forms, rules for combining words and word endings may be overused. An error called over regularization.
- Speaker 12: I love it. This is the best gift.
- Speaker 13: Why don't you have another piece?
- Speaker 14: I think somebody take-d it.
- Sue Althouse: Okay. That was our little one. I think somebody take-d it. There's that little over generalization of how do we use that past tense marker. Let's take a look at the four to five years stage. At age four, children have the vocabulary and grammatical skills to add more and more detail to what they have to say. Their desire to play with other children leads to improved social skills, which together with their increasing language permits them to negotiate, resolve conflicts and repair communication breakdowns. Only a few sound errors remain for most children. In addition, some basic literacy skills emerge such as rhyming and the naming of letters and numbers. By five, children are avid conversationalists. Let's watch this cute five-year old having a conversation with his mother about as he calls it discipline.
- Speaker 15: Do you see here? It's not the word discipline mean. What I'm trying to say here is we need to stop with it. It's just not the way it is. What's that mean, huh? What's that mean is what I'm trying to say. It's not funny.
- Speaker 16: I don't understand what you're trying to say. It just makes me laugh because I think you're so cute but I'm still trying to figure out what we're talking about. That's all.
- Speaker 15: Well, what does it mean about being bad?
- Speaker 16: What does it mean about being bad?
- Speaker 15: Yes.
- Speaker 16: It means that mommies and daddies do the disciplining, not you.
- Speaker 15: Well, I know but sometimes, I scold the cat.
- Speaker 16: Wow.
- Speaker 15: That's what I do.
- Speaker 16: You don't really scold the cat that much because he doesn't get in that much trouble.

Speaker 15: Well, yeah. Sometimes, he does. Is this the way how it is?

Speaker 16: You're saying that it's okay for you to scold the cat but it's really not okay for you to scold your friends.

Speaker 15: Disciplining is not the way it is. What does it mean? What does it mean?

Speaker 16: What does what mean?

Speaker 15: Well, it's just the way it is. It doesn't mean about scolding. Mom, it's not funny. What we're trying to talk about here is my being bad.

Speaker 16: You're being bad right now?

Speaker 15: No.

Speaker 16: I don't think so.

Speaker 15: It's just the wrong way. I mean, the wrong time.

Speaker 16: What's the wrong time?

Speaker 15: The wrong way. That means it's ... I don't know.

Sue Althouse: What a hoot. Having a conversation with a five-year old can be quite an adventure. All right. What we're going to do now is we're just going to take a minute to check your understanding of some of the aspects of expressive language development. We're going to pull up a true, false question here and see what you think. I have new shoes would be typical of a four-year old. What do you think? Is that true or is that false? Okay. Very good, folks. Yes. I have new shoes would be typical of a four-year old. You've got a four-word combination there, a sentence and it even has the plural on the shoes. That's great. Let's look at the next one. What do you think about this one? "Car go," would be typical of a three-year old? What do you think? Car go. Is that typical of a three-year old? True or false?

Okay. "Car go," would be typical of a two-year old. That is false. Two-word combinations are the hallmark of the second year. A two-word combination would be what you would see in a two-year old. If we have a three-word combination there, that's what would be typical of a three-year old. Let's look at this one. "I went to the store and got a new dinosaur. I have lots of dinosaurs. I really, really like them. Do you like dinosaurs?" That would be typical of a five-year old. True or false? Okay. Absolutely true. Yes. At five, that language explosion, they are a conversationalist. They are enjoying. Just like our little one talking about discipline, enjoying having conversations with you.

Let's turn our focus to receptive language. We've just been talking a lot about expressive. When we decode a message, it is referred to as receptive language or comprehension. Examples of receptive language would be understanding

spoken words, understanding signed words or reading. In reading, we decode print as opposed to spoken or signed language. We can use the number age association just as we did with expressive language. Infants are focused on environmental sounds and begin to understand some simple words. Around age one, children begin to follow simple one-step commands such as pointing to body parts and we saw that in our one video. By age two, they can follow two-step commands such as, "Pick up your cars and put them away."

Though a child of three could follow three-step directions, we rarely engage children in this way. What we do do however is expand the complexity of commands by embedding a wide variety of concepts. We give directives such as, "Get your blue coat and put it on the rack." As we continue teaching children new vocabulary and concepts, we find that between four and five, children understand the large majority of what we say. That's a sobering thought. An easy way to remember this is, "I'm four. Don't forget. I understand everything." Similarly, we can look at the explosion of what children understand by focusing on key features of that particular age group. When children are infants, they learn about the sounds they're hearing and the simple words that they hear often.

This continues but around age one, children begin to follow more and more simple directions like, "Kiss the baby. Pop the bubble or find the doggie." At age two, children really begin to understand a wide variety of concepts. Little big, in on, hot cold. At age three, there is an explosion in the types of questions that children understand. By four, well we've already said it. Don't forget. They are listening to and understand almost everything you say. Let's take some time to talk about the development of understanding. In the first year of life, the development of understanding is all about sounds. For example, the sound of a mother's voice, the sounds around them. Musical toys, rattles, laughter and sound play.

Eventually, the association of sounds and words with items or objects leads to an understanding of words such as mommy, daddy and there's proto words like roo, moo or meow. Babies are also beginning to understand simple phrases that they hear often such as, "Come here or where's daddy?" Around age one, babies begin to follow simple directions with good consistency and can understand some very simple questions. They indicate that they understand the names of simple pictures and objects by pointing to them on request. They enjoy listening to stories, songs and rhymes. The understanding of phrases and short sentences predominates as well as the understanding of more complex, single words like dinosaur, hippopotamus or basketball.

As noted before, at age two, children follow two-step directions. They understand basic concepts such as simple opposites and will now listen to stories for longer periods of time. At age three, children can understand more complex information. In the first example, "Get me your cup and daddy's cup." The child would need to understand possessive words like your and daddy's in order to follow this direction. In the second example, the child needs to understand quantity and location to follow the direction put a lot of Pretzels in the bag. Three to four-year

olds also understand basic WH questions. They also begin to understand more complex words, particularly, if it's related to their own interest.

For instance, at age three, my grandson understood and used the word combine harvester. I don't even know what that was. Because he was interested in tractors and vehicles. They also begin to understand more complex differences and meaning such as words that relate to emotions like happy, sad, silly and angry. Between four and five years, children can understand and answer a wide variety of questions even those related to past or future events that require the child to make predictions. For example, "What do you think will happen? Why is the man sad?" Remember to be very careful at this age. Remember the expression, little corns have big ears.

As previously noted, children at this age understand almost everything the adults around them are saying. Even though they may not have the expressive language to relate all the details back to you. Again, I'm four. Don't forget. I understand everything. Let's take a moment to check your understanding of receptive language development. This is a true or false question for you. Following simple one-step commands is a hallmark of two-year olds. True or false? We're split here. All right. Following simple one-step commands is a hallmark of two-year olds would be false. One-step commands are a hallmark of children who are age one. Following two-step commands is a hallmark of children who are two. All right. Let's go on to the next question.

All right. Four-year olds can understand almost everything you say. Is that true or false? All right. There you go. You caught on to that one. Absolutely true. Remember that phrase. I'm four. Don't forget. I understand almost everything. One more. Let's take a look at the next question. Next question is, three-year olds can understand a wide variety of questions. What do you think? True or false? Okay. All right. Very good. Yes. That is true. Three-year olds understand a variety of WH questions in particular. Particularly as they're related to the here and now. Okay. Let's move on to our next slide. We're going to take a minute to talk a little bit about the role of complexity. This is very important for folks to understand about language and learning.

For example, when learning vocabulary, children learn to use concrete words first. They'll learn words like sun, rain or snow long before they learn abstract words like weather, melt or freeze. This is true about phrases and sentences as well. For instance, phrases or sentences can be the same length but very significantly complexity. A two-year old might say, "Mommy sock." Whereas a three-year old would say, "Mommy's sock." Notice they both are two-word phrases but the addition of the possessive marker makes the second example much more sophisticated. It's especially important to remember that not all commands are created equal. For instance, "Get the car and get the big blue car," are both one-step commands. "Get the big blue car" is much more complex.

Let's compare the following two-step commands. Each more complex than the one before. Show me the girl and the boy is a simple two-step command. Show

me the tallest girl and the tallest boy is a more complex two-step command not to be outdone by show me the tallest girl and the shortest boy. We should always be mindful of complexity whenever we are interacting with children. Let's take a few minutes to talk about speech sound development. Remember that speech is about producing and combining sounds to make words. Babies produce the sounds of all languages the world over. We heard that mentioned in the infant video that we watched. In this sense, they have a universal sound system. They are primed and ready to learn the sounds of any language.

Through modeling and feedback, babies learn the sounds of their language. In English, early developing consonant sounds include the ones that are most visible. For instance, P, B and M that are made with the lips. Those that develop later have characteristics that are more complex involving air flow, tongue placement or combinations of sounds. The sound chart on the screen and the one in your handouts shows the sounds that develop earliest with a gradual progression to those that are most difficult and are mastered later. Sometimes, not until elementary school. Two-year olds are not always readily understood. We saw that in our video with the little girl with the crayons. It is this lack of understanding that often leads to temper tantrums.

Unfamiliar listeners often find themselves looking to parents as interpreters. However, by age three, about three fourths of what a child says can be understood by both familiar and unfamiliar listeners. Sound development continues to increase dramatically. By four to five years, children's speech is fully understood even if they have a few remaining speech sound errors. There are two important areas of speech sound development that we'll talk briefly about. Articulation is the word you probably hear most often. It refers to the actual production of specific speech sounds. Some children have trouble learning to produce certain sounds. They might substitute W for R as in wabbit for rabbit or W for L as in wight for light.

The R sound can be difficult to produce. That's often mastered at a later age by some children. Phonology on the other hand is about the rules for using our speech sounds. For example, most children begin producing two-syllable words by repeating the first syllable. Ma-ma for mommy. Ba-ba for bottle. This is a simplification rule common among all children. However, as children's speech becomes more sophisticated, they drop this rule and use closer approximations of the word. Maybe ba-da for bottle instead of ba-ba. To help you learn more about phonology, I've included a handout for you that's entitled Phonology Fun. You can read it at your leisure. It's quite fascinating so I highly recommend that you take a look at it. I think you'll enjoy it.

Let's do some polling again. Let's check our understanding of speech sound development. Speech sound development includes, A, expressive and receptive language. B, grammar and vocabulary or C, articulation and phonology. Which one of those do you think is the answer? Articulation and phonology is where most of you went and that is true. Those are the two aspects of speech sound development that we talked a little bit about. Let's look at the next question.

Phonology is about? Patterns and rules for using sounds? The motor act of producing sounds or neither? Phonology. What is that about? Let's see what we think. What do folks seem to think of phonology? What do you remember me saying about phonology? Okay.

The majority of you are there. Correct. Phonology is about patterns and rules for using sounds. You might be confused. The motor act of producing sounds, that's articulation. When you actually have to use your articulator to produce a sound, that's what we refer to as articulation. All right. Let's look at the next question. A child should be able to be understood by listeners 75% of the time by age what? By age two? By age three or by age four? Be able to be understood by familiar and unfamiliar listeners about three fourths of the time. Okay. Yes. The majority of you are there. That's correct. A child should be able to be understood by a familiar and unfamiliar listeners about three fourths of the time at age three. That's good. Okay. Great. All right.

Let's move on to some red flags. We've covered expressive and receptive language milestones in detail. We touched just a little bit on speech sound development. What are the red flags or warning signs that suggest that there maybe a delay in a child's language or speech acquisition? There's a broad range of what is typical regarding language development in young children. These red flags are common cautionary signs accepted by language development experts. They include a lack of babbling by nine months of age, no first words by 15 months. Remember that first words usually appear during the child's first birthday. No consistent words by 18 months. Recall that children typically have a 50-word vocabulary by 18 months. No word combinations by 24 months.

Usually, children are beginning to combine words between one and a half and two years. Additional red flags include the following. Slowed or stagnant speech development. Problems understanding the child's speech at 24 months. Strangers having problems understanding a child's speech at 36 months. Other red flags regarding language and speech development include not showing an interest in communicating. Failure to respond normally such as not responding when spoken to. This may include signs that a child does not hear well, such as not reacting to loud noises. A sudden loss of speech and language skills.

The loss of abilities at any age is a serious concern and should be addressed with the family immediately. Any time one or more of these red flags is present, it's a good idea to discuss a referral to early intervention with the family. We'll talk later about strategies for approaching this sensitive subject with families. First, let's look at strategies that can be used with all children to support the development of language and speech sound skills. I'd like to start with a group of strategies that are highly effective, easy to remember and as such can be readily shared with families. C.A.R. is a simple way for adults to remember three simple strategies that encourage young children to talk.

C stands for comment and wait. Comments include talking about what you or the child are seeing and doing. Examples of comments include saying, "doggie" when you point to the dog or saying, "The car goes fast" when playing with cars and trucks. After making a comment, be sure to pause long enough for the child to take a communication turn. The A in CAR stands for ask questions and wait. During play and daily activities, include the child by asking them questions such as, "Where is the doggie? Should we buy corn or beans?" Again, be sure to pause to give the child a chance to take a communication turn. R stands for respond by adding a little more. This means that you add something additional to what the child has said.

If the child says, "doggie," you might say, "Yes. Big doggie." The CAR strategy includes several strategies we'll talk about in a little more detail. It's an easy way to remember and helps adults to focus on three simple but highly effective strategies. Let's talk about responsiveness. Early childhood educators and parents need to be intentional about being responsive to children. This means following the child's interest and being present or involved in the activity. Get down to the child's level. Match the child's level of enthusiasm. Be an engaged play partner, not a director. Include the child in your everyday activities such as cleaning, sorting laundry, shopping.

Be engaged and be a partner in their activities such as play time, story time, bath time and so forth. Children learn their language while they are engaged in daily routines. It is during these activities that your comments, questions and expanded responses help children to build both their expressive and receptive language skills such as vocabulary, grammar, word combinations, following directions and asking and answering questions. We're going to take another little survey here. We're going to next talk about asking questions and making comments. Both are important language development strategies for adults to use with children. There is a rule of thumb pertaining to these two strategies. I'm curious to know what you think before we've ever even gone over them.

When supporting a child's language development, which strategy should be used with greater frequency? Making comments? Asking questions? Do you think that they should be used equally? All right. Interesting results. If you chose making comments, you are right. The rule of thumb is to use more comments than questions. Let's explore this. As we previously noted in the CAR strategy, commenting refers to talking about what the child is seeing and doing and what you are seeing and doing. The rule of thumb is to use four comments to every question. As adults, we tend to overuse questions and spend much of our time quizzing children. When we ask too many questions, children will often shut down and stop responding.

Using the four to one rule might look something like this. During bath time, mom says, "You're making bubbles. Pop! Pop! Pop! The bubbles are popping! That one landed on your nose. Did that tickle?" In this case, mom used many more comments than questions. Commenting build vocabulary and provides frequent language models. The R in CAR stands for responding by adding a little more.

This is the same as what you may know as language expansion. Language expansion is a tried and true strategy that helps children build their word combinations, vocabulary and grammatical skills. In the examples on the slide, the child points to the dog. The adult responds by pointing and saying, doggie.

In the second example, the child says car. The adult responds with big car. In each example, the adult used what the child produced and added a little more. As noted in the CAR strategy, waiting or pausing after commenting or asking a question is a habit adults need to develop. We are often too quick to pose another question or make another comment without giving the child time to process the information and to take a communication turn of their own. No discussion about language development will be complete without mentioning literacy as well as Pennsylvania's early learning standards. Children's experiences with early language and story book exploration are the playgrounds for future literacy development.

Language and early literacy development must be supported and integrated throughout all aspects of early care and education programs. Pennsylvania has developed two sets of learning standards for early childhood. One set for infants and toddlers and one set for pre-Kindergarten aged children. The early learning standards help to inform professionals and families about appropriate expectations for children. Guide the selection of instructional materials and interactions and provide a common framework for learning from birth through third grade. It's important to note that the standards are not intended to be used as an assessment of children's competence but rather as a guide for professionals and families.

Now that we've taken a moment to mention early language standards and early literacy, let's go back to our discussion about language development strategies and ask you a reflective question. Here's a multiple choice question. Most adults tend to ask children lots of questions and do most of the talking. Reflect on your own interactions with children. Do you feel this is true of you? Is your answer yes, I need to work more on pausing and/or commenting more often? No. I think I'm pretty good at both pausing and commenting when talking with children. What do you think?

Allyson Fulton: If you would, please place these responses in the chat box. Yes, you need to work more on pausing or no, you're pretty good at it.

Sue Althouse: All right. If you feel you need to work more on these strategies, what I would suggest that you do is pick one. Pausing or commenting and focus on it for several weeks. When you feel confident with it, then add the other strategy. If you indicated that you think you're pretty good at it, pick one of these strategies to teach your families. When they have demonstrated that they have caught on, then you can introduce the next one. Okay. Let's quickly move on and we're getting short on time here so I'm going to try to go a little bit more quickly. Talking to families about a concern. We talked a bit ago about the red flags that may suggest the delay in a child's language or speech development. How do we go

about broaching such a concern with the child's family? This is a sensitive subject.

Even if the parent has been the one to voice the concern, the way in which we respond is very important. Make it a habit to have frequent conversations with the family about the child's development. Then if you need to discuss a concern, the discussion will simply be part of a typical conversation. If you have a concern, start by engaging the parent in a conversation about their child's communication and language. Always begin with positive comments. For example, "Johnny really seems to like bubbles. I've heard him say bubble a couple of times." Ask the parent how the child makes his wants or needs known. You might ask, "How does Johnny let you know that he wants to play with bubbles?"

If parents question you about their child's communication development, answer them honestly but be sure to be tactful. For example, "Johnny has lots of single words but you're right. Most children at Johnny's age are starting to put two words together." You also may want to be sure to reflect on the parent's observations. You might say, "You mentioned that Johnny uses single words a lot but that you haven't heard too many word combinations yet. I think that's a really good observation." Additionally, add your own observations. For example, "That's something I've noticed, too. He's adding a lot of single words to his vocabulary like bubble but maybe not so many two-word combinations."

If a parent seems resistant to discussing concerns, respect this. Tell the parent that you'll keep an eye on things until your next conversation. Ask them to do the same and agree to discuss it in the near future. This gives the parents time to digest what you said and to make some of their own observations. I understand that you would like a little more information about how children are determined eligible for early intervention services so I've provided a few comments for you here. Under the Bureau of Early Intervention Services in Pennsylvania, there are two programs, the infant-toddler early intervention program for children birth to three and the pre-school age early intervention program for children three to five. Evaluations and services for children under these programs are provided at no cost to families.

Evaluations for children include parent and caregiver report, information from other agencies with parent permission of course, observation and standardized testing. Children need to meet certain criteria to be eligible for services. Each program follows the guidelines of IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and additional state requirements. In Pennsylvania for example, a 25% delay in one developmental area is needed to be considered developmentally delayed. If a child is not eligible for early intervention services and parents still have a concern, they can seek an evaluation through private programs such as clinics or hospitals that are not subject to the IDEA criteria for eligibility.

However, to avoid any financial surprises, it would be a good idea for parents to check with their insurance about coverage so they are aware of any cost that

they may incur. That brings us to the end of the material I've prepared for you for today. It's quite a lot of information to digest. I'm sure you may have some questions. However, before we do that, I'd like to call your attention to the handouts that have been provided. I've already mentioned the speech and language development chart. The first part of this handout also includes a speech and language milestone chart. How my child communicates is a handout that gives parents a chance to share how their child communicates various functional messages and how they respond to the child.

This handout is a great segue into a conversation with the family about their child's communication. The handout entitled What I'm All About is a nice developmental chart where the information is shared from the child's perspective. I've also mentioned the phonology fun handout, which I hope that you'll take a look at. At this point, let's turn to the chat box for any questions that you may have for me.

Allyson Fulton: As you're typing in your questions, as a reminder, remember that the handouts, they were sent in advance but they can also be found in your GoToWebinar control panel under the Handouts tab that you can click on the Plus sign to expand that section. That way, you could see the handouts if you want to print them directly from here. They will also be placed with the archived recording on our website.

Sue Althouse: We will check the question box to see what you have. Okay. We do have one comment where someone says, "I tell families to be the sportscaster for their child's actions." That's a great little phrase. I like that a lot. That refers to the commenting or you're talking about what the child is seeing and doing and what you're seeing and doing. If you can get parents to be the sportscaster more than the interviewer, you will be doing more commenting than asking questions, which would be great.

Allyson Fulton: Okay. We have a question. At what age should we shift from commenting to questioning?

Sue Althouse: Actually, never. When you're interacting with children, it is always best to do more commenting than questioning. That's not to say that we don't need to embed questions. Our children's ability to learn to understand and respond to questions is critical but they will learn more vocabulary and more concepts if you are doing more commenting than questioning. You noticed in the video of the little one-year old where she was climbing on and off the chair. Mom was doing a lot of questioning. Kids will often tolerate that a little bit more from mom but if somebody else have walked in the room, I would be surprised if that little one had said anything. They don't generally like being put on the spot. Comments and then throwing in a question is really the best way to go at all ages actually. That's a good question.

Okay. This person, I don't know if it's a question but really love the information. Great. Glad to hear that. Because it reinforces the use of phonics in schools.

That is true. It does reinforce the use of phonics in schools. Yes, folks have started to move in that direction after having put those phonics books in a way that corner where they gather dust for a long, long time. They have been pulled back out again as we've learned more in our research about language and literacy development. Any other questions? Okay. If not, I'm going to ask you one very quickly. Okay? In the chat box, I would like you to put something new that you have learned today. Something new that you have learned.

Allyson Fulton: I am sure the folks have learned a lot today. I have learned a lot sitting next to Sue this morning. Go ahead. Take a moment. Type in something new you have learned.

Sue Althouse: Okay. The four-year olds understand everything. Don't ever forget that. Okay. The four to one ratio for commenting to questions. Some information about phonology and articulation. Good. Questions from parents are not as effective as comments. Great. I'm glad I hit that home. Difference between phonics, articulation and different parts of speech. Okay. That would be a whole training in and of itself to be talking about phonology and articulation and what do they mean and so forth. How does it relate to literacy? Again, we have comments are better than questions. Learn the ages for appropriate communication that I may have learned in the past but didn't remember. It's a good refresher review of some of the things that you know. Okay. Very good. All right.

At this point then, I would like to thank you. That ends our presentation for today. If you have any questions in the future, please do not hesitate to email me at salthouse@pattan.net. It looks like salt house. salthouse@patent.net. It's been a pleasure joining you today. I hope you feel that you've learned a few new pieces of information about language development in young children and some things that you can do in your work with children and families. Thanks again. Have a great rest of the day and have a wonderful holiday season as well.

Allyson Fulton: Thank you so much, Sue. That was an excellent presentation. I can tell just from the comments coming in there at the end that people really gained so much valuable information and ways that they can talk with families and help develop that child's communication. To all of our participants today, I want to say thank you for joining us. As stated previously, the archive session will be at the PAT website within the week. You will be receiving an electronic evaluation via email. Please take a couple of minutes to complete that as your feedback is valuable to us as we continue to offer professional development but also that feedback is valuable to the presenters that we ask to join us every month. Again, if you had more than one person that was at your location, that evaluation can be shared.

Please ask everyone who is participating in today's webinar to complete that evaluation for us. You can see that next month's date is the second Wednesday of the month. That's a change for us but because of the New Year and the holiday, we wanted to move that back a little bit. It will be January 11 and then following February 1st. We do not have those completely confirmed yet in terms of those topics. We are working on that. We hope to have that information out

here within the next week. Watch your emails for next month's topic. Again, remember that you can join our webinars in multiple ways such as phone or tablets. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask our family support team. Again, we thank you for joining us and this does conclude today's webinar. Thank you and have a great holiday.