

ORAL LANGUAGE TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Early childhood classrooms develop a climate and a context that support language learning through play, experimentation, story reading, centre explorations, singing, discussions, and other activities that promote active listening and talking. The following Oral Language Teaching Strategies, emphasized in the program, can be used during whole-class, small-group, or individual communications and can be woven into conversations and discussions during any activity.
Note: Varying groupings (whole class, small group, partners, individuals) allows you to meet a wide range of student’s language learning needs as you can communicate with many, a few, or individual students.
- Each strategy is intended to stimulate, expand, or refine aspects of language development, including the non-verbal aspects of social communication (e.g., making eye contact with the speaker).
- You may already use many of these strategies in your classroom and this list will serve as a reminder and confirmation. Some strategies may be new to you. If so, select one and emphasize it during a lesson to try it out. With repeated use it will become part of your overall strategy repertoire.
- An Oral Language Teaching Strategy has been suggested for use in each lesson. That may be the time to emphasize it, or practise using it. Of course, you will want to combine it with other successful strategies you already use.

Oral Language Teaching Strategies
<p>1. USE OPEN-ENDED PROMPTS</p> <p>Although you may wish to offer some prompts that focus on details and exact responses, the majority of your prompts should be open-ended and invite a range of answers and thoughtful reflections. Closed prompts ask for “Yes,” “No,” and other short or single word responses. Open-ended prompts often result in deeper and more extended responses. For example,</p> <p>Avoid: “Are they angry with each other?” (Closed prompt) Consider: “How are they feeling? How can you tell?” (Open-ended prompt)</p>
<p>2. MODEL EYE CONTACT WHEN LISTENING</p> <p>Model good listening by making eye contact with the student who is speaking to you.</p> <p>Support good listening by noticing it and commenting on it, for example, “I noticed Rahim was looking at Andy’s face when he was talking. It’s important to look at people when they are talking as it shows you are listening to them.”</p>
<p>3. CONNECT WITH THE STUDENT’S MESSAGE</p> <p>Listen to the meaning behind the student’s communication and respond to that. Clarify the meaning with the student, for example,</p> <p>Student: “I don’t know... I think he ran... last... later.” Teacher: “You’re not sure, but you think Ben ran in a later race?”</p>

4. MODEL GOOD LANGUAGE USE

Avoid corrections and model appropriate language such as grammatical structures, for example,

Student: "Nobody done it."

Teacher: "So you're saying nobody did it."

5. EXTEND AND CHECK THE MEANING

Expand language and check the meaning with the student, for example,

Student: "Red boots."

Teacher: "Do you mean the bright red boots with the blue stripes down the sides, or the ones with Superman on them?"

6. ENCOURAGE PARTNER TALK (e.g., Turn and Talk)

Encourage students to talk through their ideas with a partner before sharing their ideas with the group. Some students talk more with a peer than in a large group setting and this offers opportunities to talk aloud and express ideas when large group performance is not an issue.

7. PROMOTE PIGGY-BACKING

Encourage the expansion of conversation through 'piggy-backing' (adding to another person's ideas), for example,

Teacher: "Evan said What do you think about that?"

OR

Teacher: "So Joanna thinks... and you added to her idea. It's good to listen to other people's ideas and add to them."

8. ROLE-PLAY: EXPLORE OTHER PEOPLE'S VIEWPOINTS

Encourage role-playing to help students to develop understanding and empathy for another viewpoint, for example,

Teacher: "Let's all pretend to be the girl in this picture. What is she feeling? What would she say?"

9. DISAGREE AGREEABLY

Help students to cope with disagreements in social situations, for example,

Teacher: "Is he looking happy right now? So is there something else you could say that doesn't hurt his feelings?"

Help them to disagree in discussions, too. For example,

Student: "NO, he's telling his brother that he's GOOD at soccer."
(Disagreeing in a loud, argumentative voice with a student who had a different interpretation of the picture.)

Teacher: "It's okay to disagree about what's happening in the picture. You could say, 'I think something different is happening,' and use a quieter voice when you tell us."

10. OFFER PROMPTS AND FRAMEWORKS TO RELUCTANT TALKERS

Help the child who is shy, or finds it hard to talk, by offering low-key prompts to elicit responses, for example,

Teacher: "Tell me about that, Jake... was it hard to do?"

OR

"Did you mean...?"

OR

"If I started the idea, could you finish it? I can see..."

Teaching Tips:

- Using puppets sometimes helps reluctant talkers to share ideas.
- If a student needs extra time in order to organize ideas, you could consider saying, "I'm going to ask you to tell me about... in a minute, Emma."