

Strength-Based Coaching: Empowering teachers to create upward spirals of quality that build language and literacy

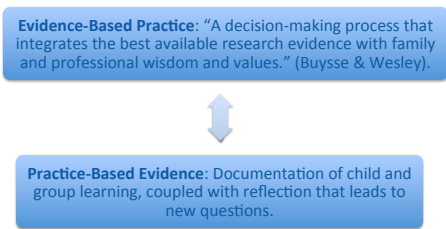
Presented by
Kori Bardige, MS. Ed.
&
Betty Bardige, Ed.D



Where did WE start?

- **Focus on social-emotional development:** Work together to improve children’s self-regulation, and reduce challenging behaviors
- **Focus on environment and schedule:** Work together to reduce clutter; organize areas so that children can be more independent; decrease interruptions and time-outs and increase learning time
- **Focus on DAP:** Work together to increase, strengthen, and integrate play-based and hands-on learning activities.
- **Focus on language and literacy:** Work together to strengthen children’s foundations for reading

The practice-Research dialog



How Can Research Inform Our Practice?



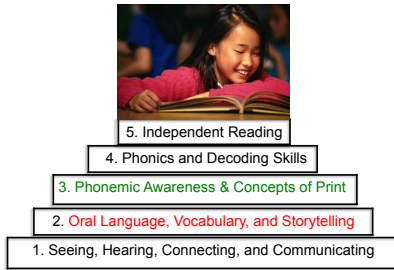
Strength-Based Coaching Cycle






A brief Overview of Literacy Foundations

- What Really Matters for Literacy
- Closing the Vocabulary Gap
- The Power of Play Talk & Decontextualized Language
- Some Evidence-Based Language & Literacy Practices:
 - Dialogic Reading
 - Content-Rich Conversations: Science & Pretend Play
 - Meaningful Print & Alphabet Learning
 - Sound and Word Play
 - Writing

Steps to Literacy



Language is Key

-  **To literacy:** storytelling, vocabulary, how sounds combine to make words
-  **To learning:** questions, step-by-step problem solving, concepts, reasoning, memory
-  **To social/emotional development:** making friends, negotiating, expressing feelings, self-control, resilience

Rich Language is Foundational to Reading Comprehension

“Children are natural knowledge seekers. Whether it’s orca whales, dinosaurs, or the latest technological doo-dad, children’s activities are often guided by their need to know.”

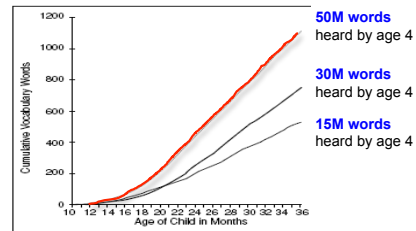
“To be successful in reading comprehension, students must acquire knowledge.”

“Children need time—to actively play with ideas, experience and ask questions, connect new learning with what they already know. Activities that pose problems, get children immersed in interesting topics, allow them the time to develop expertise -- all contribute to knowledge gains.”

Neuman, S. B. (2010). Lessons From My Mother Reflections on the National Early Literacy Panel Report. *Educational Researcher*, 39(4), 301-304.

The Vocabulary Gap

Source: Hart, B., and Risley, T. (1995). *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*. Baltimore, Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company



Language develops in caring relationships, through back-and-forth conversations that build on children’s natural curiosity and desire to connect.



Play Talk Makes the Difference for Language Development!

- Chit-chat
- Conversation
- Singing
- Silliness
- Story-telling
- Word Play

...because Play Talk is rich talk!

- Responsive – Follows the child's lead
- Imaginative and often silly
- Open-ended and encouraging
- Asks and explores questions
- Includes talk about past, future, what if...
- Models thinking and reasoning
- Richer vocabulary
- Longer conversations with more information
- More elaborate sentences and descriptions
- Word play, songs, & rhymes

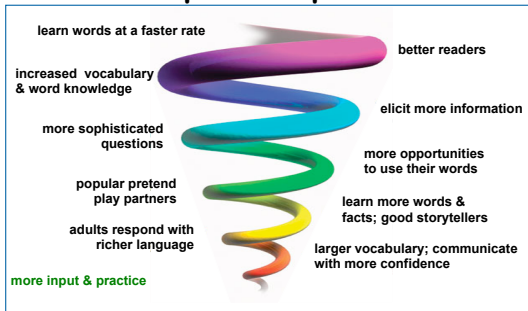
Dual Language Learners

- Go through the same developmental steps in both languages
- May know some words in just one language and some in both
- Develop total vocabularies just as large as those of children with similar experience learning only one language
- Gain many advantages – **as long as at least one language is strong!**

Learning more than one language can boost verbal and nonverbal IQ and cognitive flexibility.



Play Talk Creates an Upward Spiral



Evidence-based practices to consider



Decontextualized Language

Extended conversations include talk about:

- Past
- Future
- What might be
- Imaginary
- Abstract
- What if ...



Dickinson, D.K., & Tabors, P.O. (2001). *Beginning literacy with language: Young children learning at home and school*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Dialogic Reading


- Use books as springboards for conversation
- Read aloud with small groups so you can really talk
- Engage child with questions and prompts as you read
- Increase participation and learning with repeated readings



It is the talk that surrounds the storybook reading that gives it power.
- NAEYC & International Reading Association

Vocabulary-Rich content

My Hamster



rodent handle
omnivorous gentle
store food curious
cheek pouches active
burrow
desert nocturnal hibernate

What do we want to put into practice?

- What struck you most from the language and literacy training?
 - What are you interested in learning more about?
 - What ideas do you want to incorporate into your practice?



Writing

- Give children reasons to write and a variety of materials to write with.
- Write children's words and read them back together.
- Provide models and supports for writing.
- Help children represent the sounds they hear.



Using Science to infuse vocabulary development

- Teacher became frustrated that there wasn't enough time for children to explore the activity and wondered about changing the structure of free play
- Teacher lengthened free play and had more time to engage children in science conversations
- She got excited about the children's questions and used those as provocations for her next science activity



Mature Pretend Play

Mature pretend play: Dramatic or constructive (building, setting up miniature worlds) play in which children co-construct a story or scenario.



Usually it takes about 30-40 minutes to gather props, negotiate roles, and play out a story. Children who play together frequently often return to the same play themes, elaborating stories over weeks or even months.

Reflect: What Successes Did We Achieve?



Assess: What Are Our Next Steps?



High/Scope 10 Country Findings: Implementation

- Bring in new materials.
- Arrange and combine items to invite to suggest new ways for children to explore
- Wonder and reason aloud.
- Help children put their questions, hypotheses, discoveries, and explanations into words.
- Introduce vocabulary and concepts that will expand children's ideas.



Children **learn more** when teachers **wonder more** & **instruct LESS**



Bonawitz, E.B., Shafto, P. et al. (2011) The double-edged sword of pedagogy: Teaching limits children's spontaneous exploration and discovery. *Cognition*, 120(3), 322-330.

Ask and Encourage Interesting Questions

- **Find out what children want to know!**
- **Ask Genuine Questions** – whose answers you really want to know
- **Ask Reflective Questions** – that make children think
 - “I have been watching you build and I’m curious. How could you get the blocks to balance so the tower could stand on its own?”

Give children time to think – really listen and respond to their ideas



High/Scope Study: Preschool Experience in 10 Countries



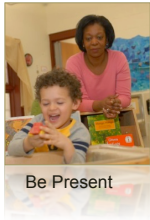
Montie, J. E., Xiang, Z., & Schweinhart, L. J. (2006). Preschool experience in 10 countries: Cognitive and language performance at age 7. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 21, 313–331.

Making More Changes: Upward Spirals

- Teacher began rearranging her environment to make more room for the science center that had previously been in a small corner of the room.
- In doing so she created spaces where children could explore independently and had materials that prompted their own investigations



Powerful Interactions



Be Present



Connect



Extend Learning



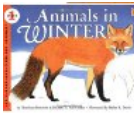
The Alphabetic Principle

Phonemic Awareness + Concepts of Print = Alphabetic Principle

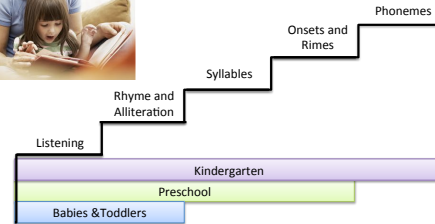


- The **ALPHABETIC PRINCIPLE** is the idea that letters (or letter combinations) represent the individual phonemes that make up words.
- In order to grasp this idea, children must be able to **identify the individual sounds in words** and **blend them together**, and also **recognize letters and their associated sounds**.

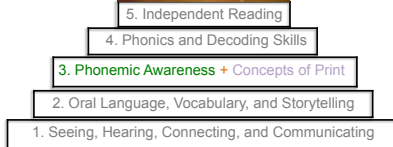
Making the Shift from Weekly Themes to Extended Studies



Building Phonemic awareness



NEXT Steps to Literacy



Creating Upward Spirals of Literacy – Using Environmental Print

- Use writing to convey messages and share experiences (e.g., morning messages)
- Organize materials (e.g., room labels, cubbies)
- Organize behavior (e.g., visual schedules and rules)
- Give directions (e.g., room signs, recipes, snack prep)
- Display important concepts/learning taking place in the classroom (e.g., bulletin board displays, posters)
- Use print in pretend play (e.g., labels for creations, signs indicating directions, menus, lists)
- Use print to convey stories/retelling stories and creating new ideas (e.g., create class books, plays, recreate favorite books)

Show Children How Print works

Give children many reasons to write, a variety of tools and supports, and lots of time to practice!

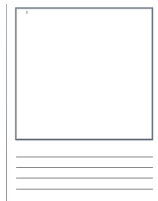


Look how far we've come! Continuing the Spiral



Writing Provides an Outlet for children's ideas

Story Paper



Teacher's Excitement spurs Problem Solving

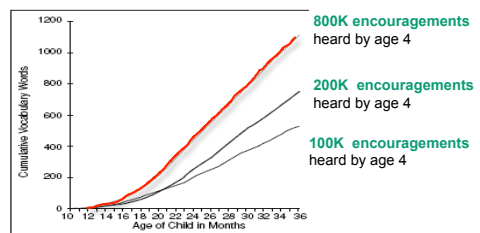


Parents were Thrilled!



The Encouragement Gap

Source: Hart, B., and Risley, T. (1995). *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*. Baltimore, Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company



Ready for K: Social-emotional & executive function Skills

- Ability to consider others' points of view
- Expressing emotions appropriately – without undue tantrums or meltdowns
- Holding a goal and steps in mind – working memory
- Deferred gratification – waiting a turn, etc.
- Ability to focus – or deliberately shift attention
- Strategies for self-control, such as self-talk, relaxation techniques, stop and think, breathe
- Knowing how and when to ask for help

Strength-Based Coaching: Empowering teachers to create upward spirals of quality that build language and literacy

Kori Bardige: kbardige@gmail.com
Betty Bardige: bettybardige@gmail.com

www.learningcircleconsulting.com

Facebook: Language-Building Tips
Twitter: [@bettybardige](https://twitter.com/bettybardige)



Visiting Kindergarten



Final Visit: Culmination of our collaboration

