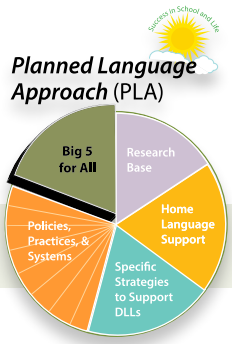
Joan Talks About the Big 5

Oral Language and Vocabulary



Oral language and vocabulary are developed when children use their spoken language skills, including:

- **Interactive language skills**—or the ability to take turns or use gestures while speaking
- **Receptive language skills**—or the ability to hear and understand the language or languages of their environment
- **Expressive language skills**—or the ability to make or use the sounds of their language or languages

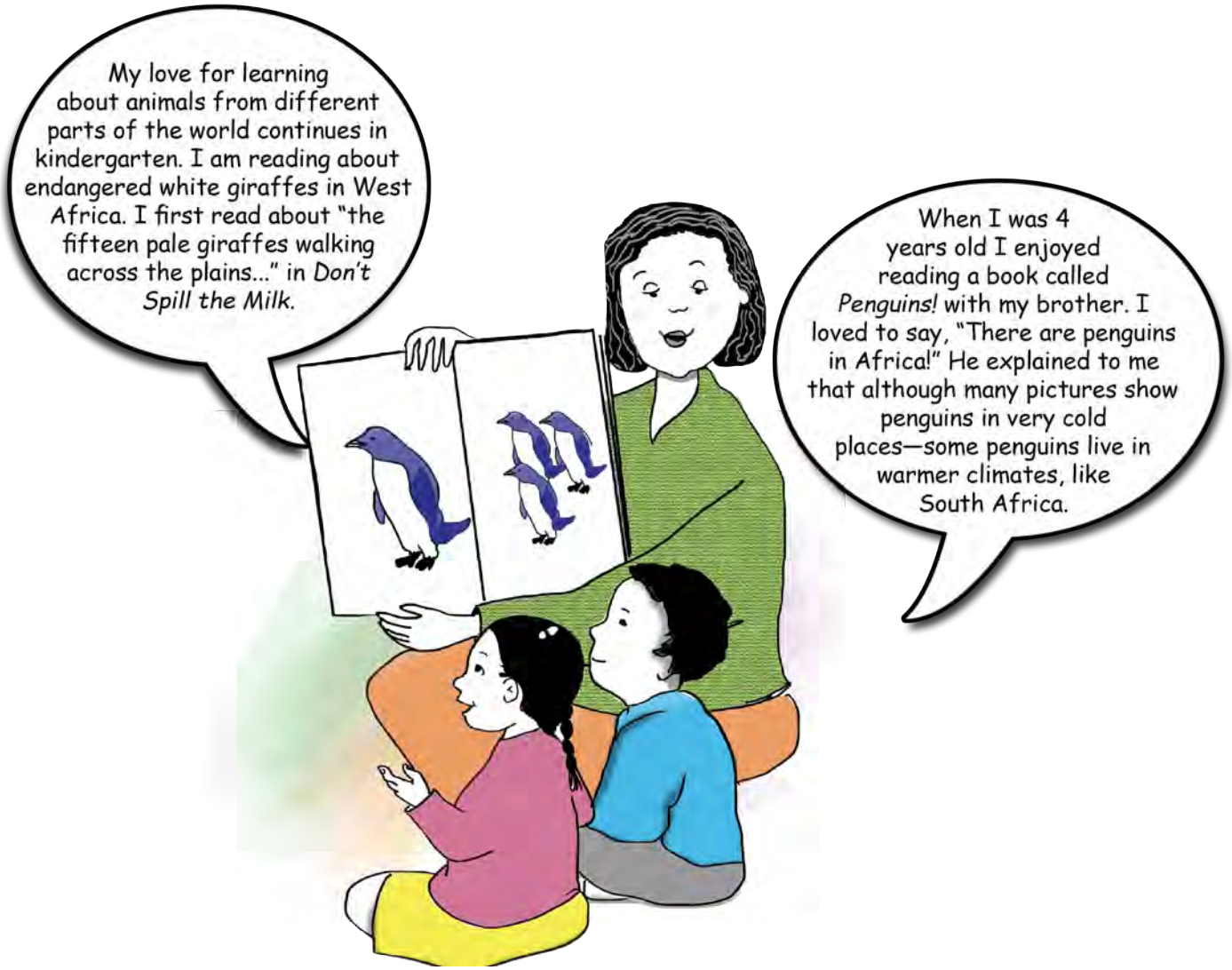
Dual language learners may learn some words first in one language, and other words first in another language. Once they have learned a word in one language, they only need to learn the label in the other language because they already know the concept or meaning.

Oral language and vocabulary meet book knowledge and print concepts

"Oral vocabulary is very important to reading comprehension; readers need to know the meanings of individual words to understand the text as a whole" (Schickedanz & Collins, 2013, p.11).

Oral language and vocabulary meet background knowledge

Children's knowledge bases increase as adults talk with them. This can include discussing and sharing information through casual conversations of even storytelling. Daily oral communication allows young children to ask questions that help them to clarify, learn additional information, and understand the meaning of the words in context.



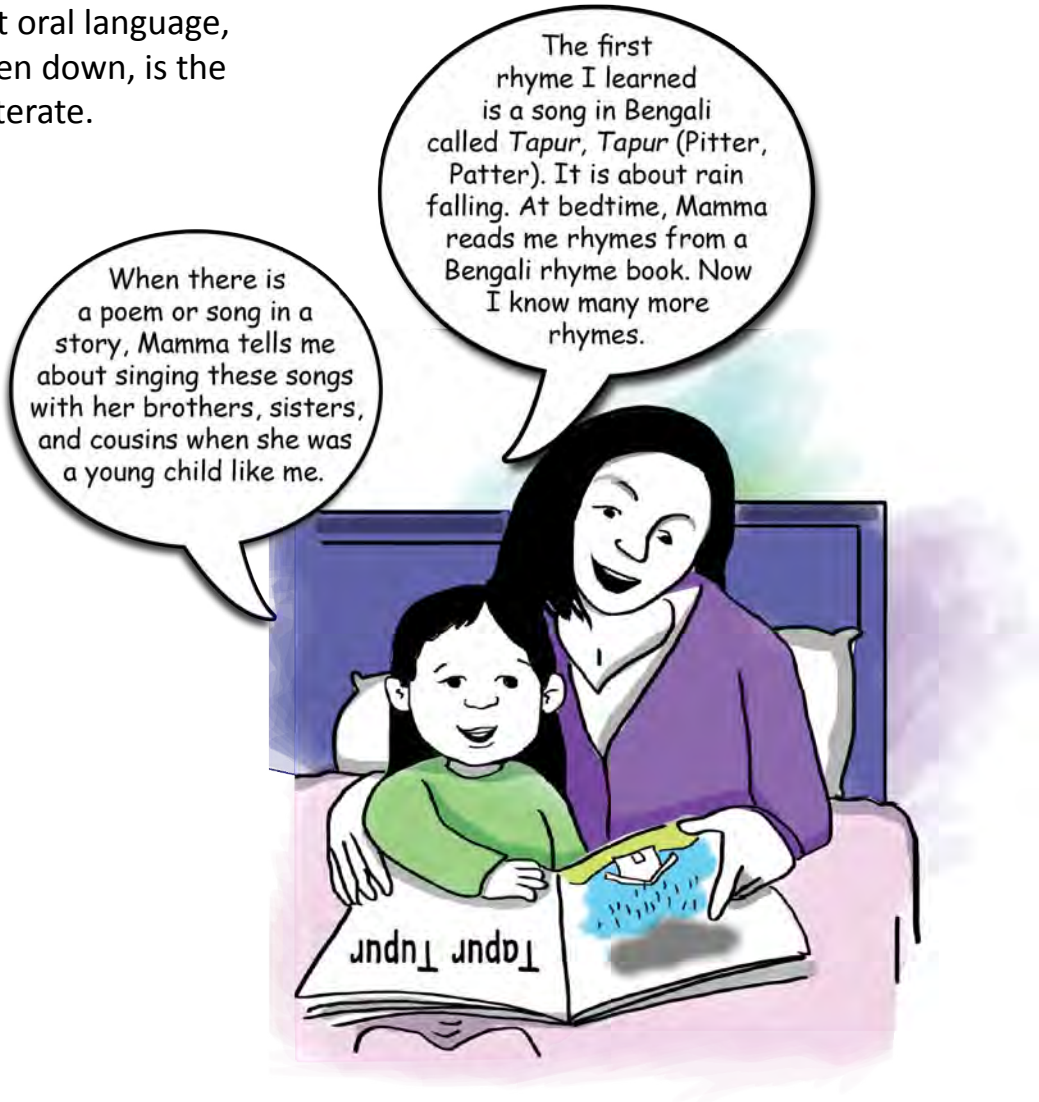
Oral language and vocabulary meet alphabet knowledge and early writing

In order for children to learn to read and write, they must learn to make the connection between oral language and its representation in print. “Spoken language and reading have much in common” (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998, p.51). Children recognize the printed words on the page and understand what the phrases, sentences, and paragraphs say (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000).

Oral language and vocabulary meet phonological awareness

As children listen to languages—both their home and others—they begin to identify the sounds within each language. For example, children will note words that have similar beginning and ending sounds or words that sound the same but have different meanings.

Phonological awareness is critical in learning to read any alphabetic writing system. Awareness that print on the page is related to the sounds of language and that oral language, in turn, can be written down, is the basis of becoming literate.



Professional References

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