Early Essentials
Quick Start Guide for Language Development

Know the Essentials

• Language is about communication, and also about community, culture, and connection.
• Babies communicate before they can talk, using gestures, babbles, and other cues to indicate their needs.
• When adults listen to and talk with babies, they help them form attachments and build relationships with those around them.
• Listening to and talking with a baby helps the baby form a sense of identity.
• Language helps young children make connections and understand what's going on in the world around them.
• A child's home language is the foundation for all other language learning.

Take a Deeper Look

• Growing up, how were you taught to talk and listen to babies?
• How do you use routines to communicate and connect with the children in your care?
• How do you help families identify language goals for their child?
• How do you support families' enjoyment of their child's communication?

Explore Resources

• Read and complete the Study Guide: Hablemos de... El desarrollo del lenguaje y la lectoescritura emergente y su relación con la preparación para la escuela at: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Espanol/esp-ehs/ehs/desarrollo-infantil/hd-lenguaje.html
• Read More Than Baby Talk: 10 Ways to Promote the Language and Communication Skills of Infants and Toddlers at: http://mtbt.fpg.unc.edu/node/4
• Complete Module 3: The Importance of Early Interactions especially focusing on slides 9-12 at: http://ilabs.washington.edu/outreach-modules
Record your notes from watching the Practice Moment. Then, reflect on early language development, using the questions below as a guide.

In Alicia’s family child care program, there are lots of back-and-forth interactions between the toddler and family child care provider during this routine diaper change.

How might you...

• Use routines to support language development?
• Show a child you are interested in his communication?

This Early Head Start teacher notices this toddler’s interest in water coming from a downspout, and builds on his interest to expand his language.

How might you...

• Use a child’s interests to support and foster language development?
• Follow a child’s lead to expand vocabulary and learning?
• Use language to extend her learning?

This home visitor is encouraging the mother to take the lead in supporting the child’s language development. She also is showing how she values the family’s home language.

How might you...

• Encourage families to support their child’s language development?
• Reinforce for families the importance of helping their child develop their home language?