

What the Research Tells Us



Children’s daily interactions and experiences with language drive their long-term developmental outcomes across a range of domains including social-emotional development, cognitive development, and language and literacy development (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

Key characteristics of these daily interactions and experiences are:

- ▶ Long-term relationships with caregivers and teachers that are warm and supportive
- ▶ Encounters that build on children’s cues, interests, and background knowledge
- ▶ Conversations with strong language models that include opportunities to use and hear rich and varied language



These characteristics are associated with strong developmental outcomes (Rosenkoetter & Knapp-Philo, 2006).

Children are highly responsive to the quality and quantity of the languages used in their environment. Children need strong language models in order to prepare them for the demands of reading and school success (Rowe, 2012).

Young children are capable of learning multiple languages from birth, when they are in regular contact with strong language models in each language (Espinosa, 2013).

Children’s knowledge and experiences in their home language(s) are the foundation of their school readiness and English language acquisition (Genesee, 2012).

Children develop knowledge about language use and emergent literacy experiences within their family, culture, and community contexts. Classroom experiences should build on and extend these early experiences in partnership with families (Fulgini, Hoff, Zepeda, & Mangione, 2014).

Children’s earliest experiences with “the Big Five” language and emergent literacy skills—alphabet knowledge and early writing, background knowledge, book knowledge and print concepts, oral language and vocabulary, and phonological awareness—are important predictors of later reading and of long-term academic success (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

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