

Language Intervention Considerations for Children With Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities

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The ASHA Technical Report entitled *Principles for Speech-Language Pathologists Serving Persons With Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities (MR/DD)* and *Guidelines* document outline a number of principles that bear directly on language intervention issues for children with MR/DD (ASHA, 2005a, 2005b). This paper highlights a number of those principles and discusses their implications for providing intervention services to children with MR/DD.

Principles

Individuals with MR/DD of all ages are eligible for SLP services when enhancement of communication skills is needed to function effectively in their everyday lives, regardless of age or cognitive level relative to communication abilities.

Certainly, the central issue when considering language intervention for children with MR/DD is access and eligibility. As implied in this principle, eligibility for SLP intervention services has been a thorny issue. Historically, intervention services often have been denied based on arbitrary criteria such as age or cognitive level (National Joint Committee for the Communications Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities, 2003a, 2003b; Whitney-Thomas, Timmons, Gilmore, & Thomas, 1999). "Cognitive referencing" is perhaps the most unfortunate myth that has operated in our field to deny potentially beneficial services. In many school districts today, SLPs are not allowed to include persons with mental retardation on their active caseloads if measured language skills are commensurate with measured cognitive level. As many as 31 state educa-

tion departments require SLPs to consider a child's IQ score as well as language performance in determining eligibility (Casby, 1992). This eligibility framework of "cognitive referencing" rests on the assumption that language skills cannot improve beyond cognitive ability.

There are several reasons why this assumption has been called into question. First, it oversimplifies the complex relation between language and cognition (Rice & Kemper, 1984). In particular, measures of discrepancy have little reliability across time or across specific language and cognitive measures (Cole & Fey, 1996; Cole, Mills, & Kelly, 1994; Krassowski & Plante, 1997). Even more relevant is the finding that language intervention benefits children with MR/DD even when no language-cognition discrepancy exists (Cole, Dale, & Mills, 1990; Cole et al., 1994). In two studies comparing response to intervention, the children with no language-cognition discrepancies actually made greater gains in response to language intervention than did children whose cognitive skills surpassed their language abilities (Cole, Coggins, & Vanderstoep, 1999; Fey, Long, & Cleve, 1994). Thus, the cognitive referencing model is an unstable predictor of children's ability to benefit from language intervention, and it may at times predict in the wrong direction. There is a continuing need for SLPs to educate decision makers of the inappropriate use of such criteria to deny services to individuals with MR/DD.

Although one could argue that the cumulative benefits of intervention services surely would be supe-

rior if intervention is begun sooner rather than later, one cannot arbitrarily designate an age at which services would no longer be beneficial. Rather, SLPs needs to consider the circumstances of persons with MR/DD and their families and must adapt to life changes.

SLPs should select intervention goals that have a meaningful impact on social, behavioral, emotional, academic, and vocational functioning within a variety of settings (e.g., home, school, community, and eventually, residential and work settings). Consequently, team members and SLPs adapt their service delivery to changes in the strengths, needs, preferences, and priorities for communication in persons with MR/DD and their changing life circumstances.

Research progress and legal mandates over the past 30 years have given rise to an expanded role for SLPs in facilitating the development and maintenance of functional communication to maximize self-sufficiency in individuals with MR/DD. Greater communication demands are apparent as children with MR/DD are more likely to interact with typical peers in their local communities and schools (Nevin, Malian, & Williams, 2002). Functional communication skills are necessary to establish and maintain an adequate quality of life within the variety of community-based settings and inclusive schools that are deemed least restrictive environments. SLPs often must educate community members that functional communication consists of far more than speech. Gestures, visual symbols, and early signs are valid means by which individuals can share thoughts, com-

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Assessment of Young Developmentally Disabled Children Theodore D. Wachs, Robert Sheehan, 1988-05-31 Our knowledge of the cognitive and social emotional functioning of developmentally disabled infants and preschoolers derives in large part from our assessment of such children This book has been developed to familiarize readers with the characteristics of developmentally disabled children and to introduce to readers aspects of measurement that are of relevance to the assessment of atypical infants and preschoolers The book has been developed with clinicians and prospective clinicians in mind These are individuals who are committed to the care and education of developmentally disabled infants and preschoolers and the families of those children The book has thus been written to provide support for the use of assessment data in planning early intervention programs Of special note in the development of this edited book is that it is divided into four major parts with interrelated chapters in each part The authors of chapters in Parts II and III had access to the chapters in Part I before writing their chapters The summary chapters found in Part IV were similarly written by authors having access to all chapters in Parts I-III This approach to the development of an edited book was chosen as a way of ensuring an integration of major concepts throughout the book This process is also a reflection of our belief that assessment is an interdisciplinary process involving the synthesis of a number of diverse interests

Current Catalog National Library of Medicine (U.S.), First multi year cumulation covers six years 1965-70

Asha American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 1991

Language Intervention Series Richard L. Schiefelbusch, 1984

Treatment Approaches to Language Disorders in Children Merlin J. Meacham, Mary Louise Willbrand, 1985

Speech and Language Evaluation in Neurology--childhood Disorders John K. Darby, 1985

Communication Problems in Autism Eric Schopler, Gary B. Mesibov, 1985-05-31 The North Carolina State Legislature's mandate to Division TEACCH has three major components First to provide the most up to date and cost effective services possible for families with autistic or similar language impaired children second to conduct research aimed toward the better understanding of such devastating disorders and third to provide training for the professionals needed to pursue these goals One element in achieving these aims is to hold annual conferences on topics of special importance to the understanding and treatment of autism and similar disorders In addition to training professionals and parents on the most recent developments in each conference topic we are publishing a series Current Issues in Autism based on these conferences These books are not however simply the published proceedings of the conference papers Instead some chapters are expanded conference presentations whereas others come from national and international experts whose work is beyond the scope of the conference but essential in our attempt at comprehensive coverage of the conference theme These volumes are intended to provide the most current knowledge and professional practice available to us at the time

Language and Treatment of Autistic and Developmentally Disordered Children Thomas L. Layton, 1987

ASHA Reports, 1965

Disorders of Communication Margaret M. Leahy, 1995-08-29 This

book is one of a series whose primary aim is to inform the professional speech and language clinicians and their colleagues in the caring professions The starting point for this series was a systematic review of those topics in human communication which are essential to the development of effective treatment programmes and effective clinicians This collection of essays is designed to present the speech student and language clinician with an integrated introduction to contemporary thought and practice in the science of speech and language pathology and intervention It aims to provide a broad coverage of the basic issues in the field written by specialized authors from both sides of the Atlantic

Handbook of Speech and Language Disorders Janis M. Costello, Audrey L. Holland, 1986 **National Library of Medicine Current Catalog** National Library of Medicine (U.S.), 1989 *Clinical Aphasiology* Thomas E. Prescott, 1986 *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 1992

Communication for the Speechless Franklin H. Silverman, 1995 HA18 Communication for the Speechless 3 e Franklin H Silverman Marquette University 18487 9 384 pp 6 x 9 0 133 10954 2 paperbound 1995 34 50nk August This bookUs primary goal is preparing students for clinical work with persons who are severely communicatively impaired It provides a full set of strategies and devices for working with the communicatively impaired and teaches methods for selecting those most appropriate to the individual client *The Journal of Speech and Hearing Disorders*, 1989 **Aphasia** John C. Rosenbek, Leonard L. LaPointe, Robert T. Wertz, 1989 **Developmental Language Intervention** Kenneth F. Ruder, Michael D. Smith, 1984 **Language-related Learning Disabilities** Adele Gerber, 1993 A practical text reference on the relationship between learning disabilities and the linguistic and cognitive factors that contribute to academic failure Among the topics explored are the theoretical foundations of learning disabilities the nature of language related learning disabilities and beneficial intervention methods The volume also reviews current trends in service delivery such as team teaching classroom based intervention consultation collaboration and staff curriculum and program development For professionals educators and graduate students in speech language pathology and special education Annotation copyright by Book News Inc Portland OR *Assessing the Oral Language Development and Intervention Needs of Students* Patricia I. Myers, 1987

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