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Language and Communication Skills Kit for the Speech Pathologist

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Kelly, Belinda, "Language and Communication Skills Kit for the Speech Pathologist" (1974). *Honors Theses*. 267.

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HONORS PROJECT
LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS KIT
for the
SPEECH PATHOLOGIST

submitted by Belinda Kelly
on April 30, 1974

DEVELOPING LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

"Every child is born a genius." Motivation and stimulation during a child's first five years of growth, especially, can enhance this statement; but more than likely the child will never be fully stimulated and allowed to develop to his full potential.

The young child is a learner—he develops an insatiable curiosity about language. Words become important tools in his life. What about the child with unintelligible speech and/or delayed language? He is limited in his ability to express himself and in relating to others. This child has never experienced effective use of sight, sound, feeling, taste, and smell in developing effective speech.

The speech pathologist confronted with the child who has been deprived of language experiences may find the child to be limited in many areas or maybe only one area. The causes and reasons for language and/or speech delay are varied and many times undeterminable. The damage may be organically and/or environmentally oriented—mental retardation, learning disability, brain-damage, unusual emotional struggles (a family break-up or a death), emotional illness, and late maturation are instances where speech and language difficulties are found.

A delay in speech and/or language is not only a handicap in communication, but affects all areas of an individual's life. It can affect academic achievement and personality development. The very important development of a healthy, confident self-concept is hindered sometimes to the point of being shattered by the inability to communicate "normally" with the world around him.

The speech pathologists must always remain open to new ideas and developments to be able to serve each special individual and his unique problem. No situation can be likened to a previous one. There are too many variables involved and no way to impersonalize the child and his problem.

The speech and language kit I have developed is in no way complete, but can be continuously added to as new materials are developed. Each item in the kit relates to specific areas of development, but each item can be used according to the clinician's originality and creativity—the only limit is that which the clinician places on herself. The kit is the beginning of a collection of items which will be useful in articulation and language therapy.

The following page will list the items contained in the kit. This will include a description, the area(s) of development, and some suggested uses of the item.

1. Articulation Test

Used to test the articulatory ability of the client. Each consonant sound is tested in all positions—initial, medial, and final. The child is expected to respond spontaneously to the stimulus which is the picture and corresponding phrase of question.

2. Articulation Games

Each game consists of pictures which present that specific sound in all positions. The sounds included are /b/, /p/, /d/, /t/, /k/, /r/, /s/, and /f/. The therapist can play many different games; use the game board to elicit word and phrase responses; and also use it to stimulate conversational speech activities.

3. Articulation cards

Several consonant sounds are presented in word pictures in the initial, medial, and final position. In identifying the pictures the child experiences his sound in words. They can also be used for stories, matching games, riddle games etc.

4. Conversational Speech Cards

Each card pictures a situation the child can describe. The cards stimulate conversational speech. They can be used to develop syntax, morphology and semantics. The collection of cards contain realistic as well as fantasized situations. Imagination can run wild and free.

5. ABC Cards

Each card contains a letter-capital and small printed letter-and a pictured object. For example: Aa apple, Bb banana, through Zz zebra.

The child with auditorial-perceptual difficulties (learning disability, dyslexia) can benefit by associating the written and verbal symbol with the object that begins with that symbol.

These cards can also be used in articulation therapy as well as in language development for building vocabulary and developing sentence structure.

6. Tactile-kinesthetic consonant cards

These cards present each consonant sound and its cognate. The voiceless sound is made with soft felt. The voiced sound is sandpaper. Some children need not only auditory and perceptual stimulation, but tactile-kinesthetic stimulation as well. It helps in producing the sound to feel it. The sound quality is represented by sandpaper (the hard sounds) and by felt (the soft sounds). The shape of the letter can be felt for symbol association to the auditory stimulus.

7. Association Cards

There are various situations presented on cards in sets of three; for example: Card 1-a fish Card 2-a bowl and a fish Card 3-the fish is in the bowl.

The child can associate the order of events by correct sequencing. Activities can develop short term memory; syntax-prepositions, sentence order; articulatory ability-conversational speech; and imagination in story telling. Various games can be played, again the therapist's ability to be creative and original is important for devising new ideas and interest for the child.

8. Body-part chart

The basic body parts are pictured on a comical character from Richard Scarry's Best Story Book Ever.

It can be used for learning the body parts, developing right-left discrimination, as a basis for motor activities, and many other activities.

9. Reinforcement

Hand made puppets have been made as examples for the children to make themselves. A paper-bag puppet, and a construction paper puppet on a stick, along with sock puppets are easy fun puppets that the child can make his own creation prove very reinforcing, create a feeling of achievement, and give the child something he can take out of therapy to show how well he has done. These and other creations the child can make himself also improve fine motor skills.

Another activity which can be used for reinforcement and hand-eye coordination development is one involving the shoe-string animal cards. These cards have numbered holes in them in which a shoestring is used to connect them. The child must follow the number sequence and bring the string through the holes.

10. Sentence building cards(syntax and transformational grammar)

Noun, verb and adjective(including articles and conjunctions) are included. Three basic sentence patterns for sentence building included are: N V; N be(V) N; N be(V) adj. As child progresses more complex patterns can be introduced. (Structured Language by Monsees)

The child is introduced to the simplest first. He can place the Noun, Verb or Adjective cards in a card-board to construct his own sentences using the specified sentence pattern. This activity is a time saver because there is no handwriting required. It is very useful in language therapy-especially in syntax development.