Language Nest
Program Planning
and
Administration
Sample of Language Nest Handbook from the Chief Atahm Language Nest

History

We are proud to have been the first language nest in B.C. The Language Nest was established in 1987 on the Adams Lake Reserve, near Chase. From its beginnings, the primary goal has been a language-enriched environment wherein children could be immersed in the Secwepemc language. The program provides a child-centred all-day program for children from 6 months old to 4 years old.

Mission Statement

Our vision is to provide an enriching environment that nurtures our very young children and their caregivers to be strong and healthy Secwepemc citizens who are fluent speakers of the Secwepemc language.

About the Language Nest

The Chief Atahm School language nest is a community-developed program serving the unique needs of Secwepemc families. The overall goal of the language nest is to immerse young children in the Secwepemc language. The children will develop an understanding of the language and will begin speaking it at the nest and in their homes and community.

Elders instruct the children entirely in the Shuswap language. Younger assistants help plan the program and help with the children. As the Elders are teaching the children, the younger assistants learn more of the language.
Immediate Goals of the Language Nest

The following are immediate goals of the language nest:

1. Promote awareness of the Secwepemc language within families and community.

2. Establish a beginner level of Secwepemc language comprehension and speaking for very young children.

3. Provide a safe and nurturing “home-like” environment.

4. Immerse the children in a Secwepemc speaking environment with no reinforcement of English.

5. Engage children in developmental activities that promote positive social interaction.

6. Involve parents in learning to speak the language with their children and support the language learning at home.

Long Term Goals of the Language Nest

The following are long-term goals of the language nest:

1. All children in the language nest will be fluent speakers of the Secwepemc language.

2. Parents and community members will continue speaking the Secwepemc language at home and in the community.

3. All early childhood developmental needs will be met to ensure happy, healthy future leaders in the community.

4. To provide a model for other communities working on establishing language nest programs.
Schedule

The Language Nest is open from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Wednesday to Friday. The Language Nest is in operation from October to May as funding permits. The daily program includes individual and group activities; indoor and outdoor play; directed and semi-directed activities; as well as snack and meal times. General care, including meals, toileting, naps and dressing are part of the daily routines.

Routines

Routines are activities in which the children participate in regularly during the course of the day that correspond to their biological and developmental needs. These include: body and dental hygiene, dressing and undressing, snacks and meals, departures and arrivals, and prayer.

Language Teaching

The language nest aims to create a language-rich environment that fosters the development of the whole child. The teaching practices support the holistic development of each child. The nest provides a child-centred facility with varied experiences that fosters intellectual and emotional stimulation. Practical, hands-on learning situations are daily activities as well as a variety of early childhood games, books and songs.

To support the development of natural, everyday language, the language nest uses the Total Physical Response (TPR) language teaching approach. TPR is incorporated throughout the day to assist with vocabulary enhancement when necessary. For example, if children are needing support in learning the language of the actions associated with putting away their dishes then a TPR mini-lesson will be developed to assist them in learning the vocabulary.

Although staff at the language nest communicate in the Secwepemc language at all times with your child we are aware that they need extra support at times. Gesturing, body language, tone of voice, pictures, TPR, physical reminders and many more strategies all play a role in creating opportunities for language success.
Sample Daily Schedule

8:30-9:00 a.m.  Morning Arrival
               Greetings and Free Play

9:00-9:15 a.m.  Morning Prayer in Circle
                Name songs, greeting songs
                One or two action songs

9:15-9:45 a.m.  Roll Call
                Calendar
                Learning Activity (Math, TPR, alphabet game, etc.,)

9:45-10:00 a.m.  Playtime and Wash up for Snack

10:00-10:30 a.m.  Snack
                   Wash up/brush teeth after snack

10:30-10:45 a.m.  Playtime

10:45-11:15 a.m.  Art activity

11:15-12:00 p.m.  Walk

12:00-12:30 p.m.  Wash up
                   Lunch

12:30-1:45 p.m.  Wash up/Brush teeth
                 Naptime

1:45-2:15 p.m.  Quiet play (dollhouse/colouring/art/etc.)

2:15-2:30 p.m.  Cleanup/Put on outside clothes
                 Children Depart
Vocabulary Ideas
According to Activities

Greetings and Free Play

Hello
Good Morning
Come in
Take off your: shoes/coat/hat/mitts

Hang up your coat
Put away your
shoes/coat/hat/mitts
Put on your slippers
Get your snack/put away your snack

Morning Circle

Play
Sing
Song
Pray
Make a circle

Join hands
Hold ________’s hand
Stay still
Keep quiet

Roll Call

Is ________ here?
Yes, I am
No, he/she is not here
Is he/she sick?
Where is ________?

Maybe he/she is
sick/sleeping/hiding?
How many children are here
today?
How many boys/girls are here?
Calendar

What month is it?
What year is it?
What day is it?
Let's count the days.
#’s 1-31
What are the days of the week?
Sunday to Saturday

What day is it today?
What day was it yesterday?
What day is tomorrow?
What is the name of the season?
Summer, spring, fall, winter
What is the day like?
snowy, windy, rainy, sunny, hot, cold, cloudy, foggy

Learning Activity (Math, TPR, alphabet game, etc.)

Numbers 1-10
Number
Count
What is this?
How many?
Actions: jump, walk, sit, stand, touch, point, listen, talk, laugh, play, turn around, lift, push, lie down, rub, hit, kiss, smile

Name
What is your name?
Boy/girl/woman/man/grandmother/grandfather/baby
Vowels (a, e, i, o, u)
Consonants-Vowel Blends (m + vowel/ s + vowel/ p + vowel)
table, chair, wall, door, window, floor

Eating

Food
Fruit
(orange/apple/berry/banana/grapes/melons)
Vegetables(carrot/broccoli/cauliflower/cucumber/peas/tomatoes)
Eat
Who is hungry?
Do you want some _________?

Are you finished eating?
I am finished or I am not finished
What do you want more of?
I want ___________
Are you thirsty?
I am thirsty
Drink your water
Put away your bowl/cup/ spoon
Don’t play with your food
Eat faster
Bathroom Routine

Come here
Wash
Wash your hands/face
Wet your hands
Soap
Put soap on your hands
Rinse
Dry your hands

Towel
Throw your paper towel away
Go to the bathroom
Do you need to go the bathroom?
Brush your teeth
Open your mouth
Spit

Playtime

Let’s play
Play
Don’t push
Play nicely
Let ______ have a toy
Ask him/her for it
“Give it to me”
Don’t do that

Toys (cars, dolls, blocks, puzzles, etc.)
Put away your toys
Don’t throw it
“I want ______”
What do you want?
Help clean up

Art activity

Paper
Scissors
Colours: red/blue/white/yellow/green black/brown
Scissors
Glue
Glue it
Put some glue here
Paint

Stir it
Roll it
Flatten it
Playdough
Make it
Write your name
Hang it up
Colour it
What did you: make/draw/paint/etc.??
Walk

Put on your coat/shoes/hat/mitts
Come here, I'll help you
Help me
Where is your ________?
Bring me your ________
Hurry
Let's go
Outside
Inside
It's cold/warm outside
Hold my hand
Walk on the side of the road
Be careful
Stop
Wait for me
Look for cars
Let's cross the road
Nature (rock, river, lake, island, tree, grass, snow, hill, etc.)
Community (house, dog, people, road, car, truck, etc.)
Let's go inside

Naptime

It's time to rest
Lay down
Keep quiet
Don't talk
Sleep
Bed
Blanket
Wake up
Don't wake up ________
_______ is sleeping
Tired

Children Depart

Goodbye
See you tomorrow
Have a good day
Wait for your mother/father
Don't forget your bag
Here is your ________
Give the ________ to your mother/father
Your mother/father is here
Get ready
TPR in the Language Nest

Total Physical Response is a perfect match for energetic young bodies. The basis principle of action + command = language works for teaching young children a second language. Just be sure to keep your commands clear and concise. Always remember to use real objects and body movements to demonstrate. With young children keep the vocabulary within the realm of their understanding, keep things moving and have lots of fun!
To learn more about this energetic teaching strategy check out the many websites on the subject (search TPR or Total Physical Response).

Sample Beginner Lessons

Introduction: Each lesson does not have to be lengthy. About 7 – 10 minutes long. Keep the children active and physically moving. Remember to continuously model for the children.

Notes:
Have students sit in circle formation or two rows. I found it easier to get the students to sit on the floor; however, later on you may want them to sit on chairs.

At first, have all the students participate at the same time. In later lessons you want to vary the groups, such as, all the boys/girls, all the ones on one side, 2-3 individuals, and eventually have individual students perform on their own.

It is important to remember that many of our children are hearing these sounds and words for the very first time; therefore, it is very important to be repetitive in the beginning. Also, make sure to continually model the actions for and with the students.

In the beginning the commands are given in the imperative, singular pronoun form, for example, “_________name (singular), walk to the door”. In later lessons, you may begin teaching the plural forms of commands.
TPR Unit 1: Lesson 1

Time: 7 to 10 minutes

1. Teacher Models Actions
   stand up
   sit down
   walk
   stop

2. Teacher does actions with one or two children at time. Once they are familiar with the actions you can vary the groups.

3. Sample Commands:
   **Note At this time there is no expectation to know the names of these objects, just model for the students or just gesture to indicate where you want the student to sit.

   a. Stand up, sit down, stand up, sit down
   (for variety, you can have your students stand up quickly/slowly – just change the tone of your voice).
   b. Stand up, sit down (slowly), stand up (slowly), sit down, stand up (quickly), sit down
   c. Stand up, sit down (for variety, you might want the students to sit down on different objects, such as, chair, floor, bench, coat, paper, etc.)
   d. Stand up, sit down, stand up, sit down
   e. Stand up (quickly), sit down (slowly), stand up, sit down (quickly), stand up, sit down
   f. Stand up, walk, stop, walk, stop, walk, stop, (turn the students), walk, stop, walk, stop, (turn the students), sit down
   g. Stand up, sit down, stand up, walk, stop, sit down, stand up, walk, stop, (turn the students), walk, stop, walk, stop, (turn the students), sit down
   h. Stand up (slowly), walk (quickly), stop, sit down, stand up (slowly), walk, (turn the students), walk, stop, walk (slowly), stop, (turn the students), sit down (slowly)
Unit 1: Lesson 2

Time: 7 to 10 minutes

1. Review actions from previous lesson:
   stand up
   sit down
   walk
   stop

2. New Vocabulary
   turn
   run
   fast
   jump

3. Sample commands:
   a. Stand up, walk, stop, turn, walk, stop, turn, walk, stop, turn, walk, stop, turn, sit down (make sure students are returned to the starting point).
   b. Stand up slowly (this time use the word), sit down slowly, stand up slowly, walk, stop, walk, stop, walk, stop, turn, walk (all the way back to starting point), turn slowly, sit down slowly
   c. Stand up quickly, sit down quickly, stand up quickly, sit down quickly
   d. Stand up slowly, walk quickly, stop, turn, walk slowly, stop, turn, sit down quickly
   e. Stand up quickly, sit down slowly, stand up slowly, walk slowly, stop, turn, walk, stop, turn, sit down
   f. Stand up run, stop, run, stop, run, stop, run, stop, run, stop, run, stop, turn, sit down

These are just a couple of lesson ideas to help start you off. Be creative and add in any number of actions and vocabulary. Try things like, “jump to the door and close the door with your head” or “stand up, walk to the table, sit on the table and cry”. Anything goes in TPR. Children love the unpredictability of it and the nonstop action.