First Nations
Language Nests:
Your Guide to Operating a Successful Language Immersion Program for the Very Young

Developed for First Peoples’ Heritage Language & Culture Council
by
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The Language Nest Concept
Preface

First Nations Language Nests: Your Guide to Operating a Successful Language Immersion Program for the Very Young” is intended to provide a comprehensive planning and development guide for Aboriginal language nests in the Province of B.C.

This manual seeks to support the development of language nests in the province of B.C. It is an initiative of the First Peoples’ Heritage, Language and Culture Council.

Background

The First Peoples’ Heritage, Language and Culture Council (FPHLCC), the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation (MARR) and the New Relationship Trust (NRC) have come together in support of First Nations language and cultural revitalization in British Columbia to develop a plan that will support four new language revitalization strategies. Language Nests is one the language initiatives. By working collectively we will maximize the resources available to communities engaged in language and cultural work. We are pleased that there is now funding available for Language Nests in B.C. language communities.

Key to supporting long-term culture and language revitalization will be engaging youth with their culture and language, building closer relationships between the generations; and teaching through traditional activities where the land, ceremonies, stories, history and language support each other and rekindle the relationships between children, parents, elders and the traditional culture.
Language Nests

The goal of the First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council is to create new language speakers by creating language and cultural immersion environments for preschool/early year children and their parents/family to become fluent in their original languages.

Language Nest Objectives

- To increase the number of language nests in BC First Nations communities to support preschool/early year children and families in learning their original languages.
- To promote the development of language nests and distribute materials to communities interested in developing new language nests.
- To promote Early Childhood Development programs to convert to a language nest model and teach in the first language as the language of communication.

FPHLCC Activities

- Provide funding to language nests with 100% immersion in a BC First Nations language.
- To supplement existing programs to assist in conversion from English ECD programming to a full immersion environment.
- To promote immersion and the benefits to parents through information packages developed for the website and the distribution of the immersion booklet available at FPHLCC.

Anticipated Results

- Early years or preschool aged children speaking and communicating in the language of heritage.
- Increased number of language nests in our BC language families.
- First Nations parents/families aware of the benefits of language immersion.
- More of the traditional knowledge in our languages passed on/ transmitted for future generations.
The Importance of Language

Introduction

Language is one of our most important cultural resources. Language is the vehicle of communicating a society’s history, stories and teachings. This rich cultural resource maintains a people’s ties to their land and community. First Nations people in B.C. have witnessed a dramatic shift within the last few generations from vibrant First Nations language speaking communities to predominantly English-speaking families and communities. In the province of British Columbia there are five languages that are listed in the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) language study as having less than ten speakers remaining (AFN, 1992, p.8). Language revitalization efforts in B.C. have always been problematic. Within its diverse natural landscape there exists between 27 and 34 languages representing eight distinct language families (Ignace, 1998, p.6). By the 1980’s, most First Nations communities in B.C. were one or two generations removed from having children whose first language was their Aboriginal language.

First Nations Language Revitalization

Widespread language revitalization efforts in B.C. began in the 1970’s as more and more communities became aware of the rapid loss of their languages. Generally, communities focused on implementing community language classes, archiving language stories and history, and on developing school language courses. These efforts brought attention to the state of First Nations languages but did little to stem the loss of intergenerational use. It became apparent that more dramatic actions had to occur. People began to search for models that would ensure greater success in establishing language security. The language immersion model attracted interest among people interested in language revival.
The Immersion Model

The development of the immersion school model in Canada stemmed from a rising sense of outrage in Quebec of Prime Minister Trudeau’s new policy of multiculturalism in the early 1970’s. Education in the French language at the public expense became a central issue in the argument (Leitch, 2004, p.1). Since the early 1980’s French immersion schooling in Canada has become widespread, and even mainstream, throughout all provinces of Canada. The same Charter of Rights that gave rise to French immersion spurred on the development of the first Aboriginal immersion program in Canada. A Mohawk immersion program was started in 1979 in Kahnawake, a Mohawk community near the city of Montreal. This program was modeled after the immersion school established by another Mohawk community in New York State, Akwesasne. Reyhner reports that:

Mohawks in northern New York State and southern Ontario have developed an immersion program in their Akwesasne Freedom School, which was started in 1980 by parents and individuals worried about the lack of traditional/cultural teaching in the mainstream schools and the inaccurate Mohawk and Native American history taught in them (Reyhner, 2006, p. 28).

The Mohawk immersion initiative, as well as other Indigenous immersion programs such as the Maori and Hawaiian efforts, has served to inspire the development of several other programs in Canada. According to a summary report on the “first ever conference on immersion education” held at St.Thomas University, New Brunswick in October 2005, it was estimated that there were approximately 25 First Nations immersion school sites nationally (Bear-Nicholas, 2005). Although these numbers are continuing to rise, mother tongue education does not seem to be of high priority in Canada. Within North America, several studies indicate growing efforts for language revitalization within Aboriginal communities both in school and within community life (Aguilera, 2007; Cantoni, 1996; Grenoble & Whaley, 2006; Hermes, 2007; Hinton, 2001; Ignace, 1998; Reyhner, 2006).
The Language Nest Movement

Language Nests are early preschool/childhood immersion programs that are designed to restore and enhance the use of Aboriginal languages by young children as well as by their parents and other family members. Through these programs, children are exposed on a daily basis to everyday words, concepts and traditional practices in their Aboriginal language of origin.

The Language Nest provides a setting to totally immerse the learners in the language. The children typically range in age from newborn to ages 3-5 years. Language nests utilize community language resources, fluent speakers and staff who are motivated to learn the language.

The Maori language nest movement called *Te Kohanga Reo*, established in the early 1980’s in New Zealand, proved to be a significant guidepost for the establishment of many indigenous immersion models. *Te Kohanga Reo*, or Maori early childhood immersion sites, are culturally supportive environments that:

- are bound by their underpinning philosophy that provides the nurturing and revitalizing of *Te Reo me ona tikanga* [Maori language, protocol and customary practice] and the whanau [extended family] approach that they employ.

(Lee, Pihama, Smith, Taki, 2008, p.34)
The *Te Kohanga Reo* movement expanded in 1985 to include the Kura Kaupapa Maori immersion grade schools. By 1990 Kura Kaupapa Maori was included in New Zealand legislation as a state-schooling option. The development of Maori-specific education models at all levels has greatly influenced and inspired many indigenous education programs.

In the early 1980's a group of Hawaiian educators began to develop the concept of language nests in Hawaii. These language nests called, ‘Aha Punana Leo’ have succeeded in sparking widespread language revitalization in Hawaii.

Language Nests in B.C.

The first Aboriginal language nest in B.C. was the Secwepemc Ka Language Nest that was started on Adams Lake Reserve in Chase in September 1987. The Adams Lake language nest was built on a vision of a few parents intent on saving the Secwepemc language. The idea was to provide a space for very young children (under 5 years of age) to interact with fluent Secwepemc speakers (who were mainly over the age of sixty).

The Mt.Currie community, Lil’wat Nation began a language nest initiative, the Clao7alcw (Raven’s Nest) program in the late 1990’s. They initially did a onetime intake of 3-6 year olds and followed those children through for four years (Mclvor, Language Nest Programs in B.C., 2004).

With the support of the FPHLCC eight new language nests sites have developed in B.C. It is anticipated that this initiative will inspire other communities to start early childhood immersion programs.
Frequently Asked Questions About Immersion

Q: What is language immersion education?

A: It's a type of education that helps English and mainstream language speakers learn a second language or heritage language. Within an immersion school all courses including academic subjects such as Math and Language Arts are taught in the target language. Through the increased contact with the language, students accelerate their learning.

Q: What are the benefits of knowing a second language?

A: Some benefits to learning a second language include:
- There is evidence bilingualism correlates with increased cognitive development and abilities, including memory skills and problem solving.
- Language learning assists in developing stronger literacy skills
- Research suggests that language learners develop a more positive attitude toward the target language and/or the speakers of that language.
- Increases the number of speakers for threatened languages and minority languages
(www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=4524)

Q: Will learning another language affect my child’s English language skills?

A: The results of 30 years of studies undertaken from St. John's to Victoria are clear and consistent: early total immersion students tend to lag behind English-program students in more technical aspects of the language (e.g., capitalization and spelling) until they have had a year or two of English language arts. However, by grade 5 or 6 (even if this subject has not been introduced until grade 3 or 4), they perform as well as their English-program peers.
(www.sd73.bc.ca/education.php/page/french-immersion-faq/)
Q: I (the parent) don't speak the language. Is that going to be a problem?

A: No, it is not a problem. Parents and family members can seek help from the school to learn ways to support their children at home. It is helpful for parents to show enthusiasm and positive responses to their child's efforts. Family members can show support by attending language classes and by visiting people and places where the language is being used.

Q: Should I still read to my child in English?

A: Yes, it will help the child to take an interest in reading. It will also increase their understanding of English and the world around them, which in turn will assist in their overall development.

Q: Can I bring my child to learn an immersion language at any age?

A: The earlier your child starts the closer they will achieve native-like fluency and pronunciation in the language. However, there are many successful second language speakers who learned to speak in adulthood.

Q: How many hours is the language immersion program each day?

A: Typically, language immersion extends throughout an entire day. The Adams Lake Band language nest and primary immersion program operates from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Q: Will my child learn English (reading and writing)?

A: Immersion programs typically introduce English content in the intermediate grades, after comprehension, speaking, reading and writing skills are well established in the students. This provides a foundation for a transfer of skills to take place from the second language to English.
Q: What will happen if my child doesn’t continue the immersion program?

A: Difficulty in learning another language can occur, as it would in a regular English program. Most children with regular attendance are able to overcome the challenges of learning a second language and become speakers. If, due to family or personal circumstances, your child has to leave the program, he or she may lag behind in technical English skills for a period of up to 8 months.

Q: Why should I consider going to an immersion language program?

A: If you are interested in getting reconnected to your language and culture an immersion environment is ideal. Immersion schooling provides a happy and healthy environment that helps connect families and communities.

Q: What age is best to introduce my child to a second language?

A: The younger the child, the spongier the brain, which means the faster they will learn language.

There appears to be a 'window' of learning language that 'opens' at about the age of ten months. Infants can hear much earlier, of course, and there is some evidence that they can even hear in the womb. It is clear that they will begin to imitate the 'noises' they hear, and when there is a reaction from their caregivers, they begin to associate meanings with the sounds. Over the next two years, infants acquire language at an astonishing rate. By the age of three, they have acquired basic syntax (sentence structure), basic grammar (the 'rules' of the language), and a large vocabulary of basic words necessary to their physical and emotional survival. (Deborah D.K. Ruuskanen, Professor of English Linguistics, University of Vaasa, Finland, www.linguistlist.org/ask-ling/biling.html)
Early Childhood Language Goals
Understanding Receptive and Expressive Speech

Language Development is divided into two categories, receptive language and expressive language.

Expressive Language:
Wolfson uses the term expressive language to refer to your child's ability to express or communicate his thoughts and needs to others. As a child grows, expressive language is used to refer to how well the child uses words; however, this term also refers to gestures or any other non-verbal forms of expression. Sign language for example is expressive language and does not involve speaking. Pointing to a candy is appropriate use of expressive language for a one and half-year-old. For a three-year-old, appropriate expressive language is to ask for a candy by using words. (Wolfson, Esther Boylan).

Receptive Language:
The term receptive language refers to how well your child understands what is said to him. Way before a child can verbally answer a question, he can show that he understands you by following a simple direction or pointing to a specific object. Usually a child can follow simple directions and run to find an object, well before he will start using words. Demonstrating an understanding of the answers challenges receptive skills (Wolfson, Esther Boylan).
Developmental Stages

Birth to 3 Months

Language learning starts at birth. Even new babies are aware of the sounds in the environment. They listen to the speech of those close to them, and startle or cry if there is an unexpected noise. Loud noises wake them, and they become still in response to new sounds.

Baby’s means of communication at this stage is only crying. At this stage it is imperative to respond to every cry immediately so they will begin to understand that you are there for them. By seven or eight weeks babies begin to discover you then respond by making noises.

(Better Health Channel)

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| Babies are attentive and will turn their heads to the sound of recognized voices. At this stage, babies will respond to people with a smile. Babies will also calm down or stop crying when they hear a voice that they recognize. | Babies recognize faces and when these faces come into view the baby will respond with a smile. At this stage babies coo when they are content but will cry when they are hungry, wet, distressed and each cry differentiates to say they are wet or hungry | *Speak to them gently and use their name*  
*Sing to them*  
*Let them look at your face as you talk to them*  
*Play them music*  
*Copy their little gestures* | Look directly at infants and talk with them gently using an animated face during routine care activities, such as diaper changing and feeding. Observe infants’ responses to noises and try to modify the environment to keep infants calm and engaged. Speak or shake a rattle gentle to the side of the infants’ faces. Allow infants to enjoy their own sounds by not interfering with the experience. Use the same songs for calming or play times. Infants respond better to actual voices as opposed to taped voices. Babies respond to music, Sing, hum, and chant to infants. Watch for infants’ cues and signals, such as smiling and reaching. Allow infants to hear soothing music, birds singing, water, babbling etc. | Use waking up times and feeding times to have face-to-face verbal and non-verbal interactions with infants. Engage infants by repeatedly making simple mouth movements, such as sticking out tongue or opening the mouth. Take time to determine the cause of upset and address infants’ needs by feeding, changing, calming, etc. Respond to infants’ vocalizations by making similar sounds, smiling and attending. Play with the infants by making funny noises and tickling them; repeat actions that delight infants, such as playing “Peek-a-Boo” |

(Infants and Toddlers, Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood)
4 to 6 Months
At this stage babies are making a whole range of sounds, and shows interest in how your mouth works and how the sounds come out. Conversations are very important. When your baby makes a sound, repeat it so they know what sound they have made. Show your tongue and practice words together, like ‘ma’ and ‘da’. Your baby at this stage coos and gurgles with pleasure. They babble and will listen to the sound of your voice as you speak. Baby will turn their head toward sounds. (Better Health Channel).

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<td>Some time between 4 to 6 months babies respond to the word &quot;no&quot;. They are also responsive to changes in your tone of voice, and to sounds other than speech. For example, they can be fascinated by toys that make sounds, enjoy music and rhythm, and look in an interested or apprehensive way for the source of all sorts of new sounds such as the toaster, birdsong, the clip-clop of horses' hooves or the whirr of machines.</td>
<td>At this stage babies are making gurgling sounds or &quot;vocal play&quot; occur while you are playing with your baby or when they are occupying themselves happily. Babbling really gets going in this age range, and your baby will sometimes sound as though he or she is &quot;talking&quot;. This &quot;speech-like&quot; babbling includes many sounds including the bilabial (two lip) sounds &quot;p&quot;, &quot;b&quot; and &quot;m&quot;. The baby can tell you, using sounds or gestures that they want something, or want you to do something. They can make very &quot;urgent&quot; noises to prompt you into action</td>
<td>*Talk to baby all the time, telling them what you are doing and what different noises are. *Sing to them *Make faces *Provide safe objects to look at, and within reaching distance to accidentally touch them, then try to touch them on purpose.</td>
<td>Allow infants time to explore their own vocalizations; interact only to try and extend the infants' interests in sound play. Have face-to-face, one-on-one interactions frequently throughout the day; use an engaging voice when communicating by over annunciating and stretching syllables. Vary voice intonation to match situation (e.g., use a calming voice and tone to calm infants). Label sounds as they are occurring and pinn to the source of sounds. Initiate infant games with verbal clues such as “How big is the baby?” or games that represents infants' home experiences. Use familiar names often to reinforce the connection between names and faces. Say &quot;No&quot; in a calm but serious tone when needed to protect infants from harm. Physically intervene as required to protect infants from harm.</td>
<td>Pay attention to infants and note their interests. Use names of people and objects. Keep familiar favorite objects on hand. Use infants' names frequently during play and daily activities. Wait until infant turn then smile. Use head movements to indicate &quot;No&quot; and &quot;Yes.&quot; Pair gestures with words. Describe infant's actions with words. Model pointing when obtaining new objects. Exaggerate the use of &quot;Bye-Bye&quot; at all opportunities, such as when someone leaves, when putting away toys in baskets, when going out to the playground, etc. Pair the words with the gesture. Encourage infants to wave goodbye.</td>
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7 to 12 Months
At this stage babies begin to realize that they are a separate person; they start to understand that you are separate from them, and may worry when they can’t see or feel you nearby. Baby is moving around now and the pace of life has quickened somewhat. They are now talking and making recognizable sounds, and they love it when you talk to them making them repeat single words (Better Health Channel).

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| Children at this stage listen intently, and will turn to look at you when you ask questions. Toddlers now like listening to stories and songs or like it when you say rhymes. Children discover the fun of games like peek a boo. It is at this period that he or she recognizes the names of familiar objects (Car, daddy, eyes, phone) and the child will respond to request such as “give the keys to Granny” or respond to questions such as “more juice” | Babbling as studied by Caroline Bowen changes. More consonants are included, as well as long and short vowels. Speech is used more so than crying. Baby’s first words probably not spoken so clearly have appeared (“MaMa, Doggie, Night Night, Bye Bye”) | *Make them a cupboard of their own so they can open and shut the door.  
*Give them pots and spoons to bang.  
*Sing songs and repeat phrases.  
*Bounce them while singing songs.  
*Look at simple books with clear pictures in them.  
*Talk to them a lot. | *Name sounds that the child hears in the environment.  
*Acknowledge young toddlers’ attentions with eye contact and engaging facial expressions.  
*Talk aloud throughout the day, describing actions done by adults and young toddlers using a variety of vocabulary to continuously introduce new words.  
*Point to something exciting and encourage young toddlers to attend and then praise the responses.  
*Ask parents about favorite games played at home. Do activities that use phrases: “Put it in...Hand me the...Show me the...”  
*Ask young toddlers for a toy and say “Thank you,” when it is given. Offer choices such as “Do you want the car or the ball?”  
*Show approval of responses. Use books that illustrate common actions. | *Label young toddlers’ gestures, linking words to actions (e.g., “You want to come up?”)  
*Use names for people and refer to names of items as young toddlers gesture.  
*Learn and use common signs from American Sign Language.  
*Sing simple songs and rhymes.  
*Use names intentionally when addressing familiar to young toddlers.  
*Use appropriate sounds when reading books or playing with toys such as “Beep, Beep” for a car.  
*Use the same word repeatedly and keep phrases simple such as “Nice dog.” |
1 to 2 Years
This is a time of rapid change. Baby is on the move full of energy and curiosity discovering the world. In this year the toddler is learning to be a separate person. At this stage toddlers are babbling loudly to self and others as though having a conversation. They will listen to things said and understand some things such as ‘No’ or ‘Stop’. They will follow simple instructions such as “Get your shoes.” They will use up from 20 to 50 recognizable words. At this stage toddlers are now putting two words together such as “Daddy’s car”. Children at this stage are now able to tell you most of what he or she wants with words, for example “want more” (Parent Link).

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| At this stage the toddler points to pictures in a book when you name them, and can point to a few body parts when asked. He or she can also follow simple commands and understand simple questions. The toddler now likes to listen to simple stores and enjoys it when you sing songs or say rhymes. This is a stage in which they will want the same story, rhyme or game repeated many times. | Toddlers are accumulating more words as each month passes. He or she will even ask 2-word questions like “Where ball?” and combine two words in other ways to make the stage 1-sentence types. Words are becoming clearer as more initial consonants are used in words. | *Give toddlers simple puzzles to play with.*  
*The child will love to look at picture books, especially if you name the pictures and let them turn the pages sometimes.*  
*Play games where the child has lots of opportunities to say no, such as “Is Daddy under the bed?”*  
*Young children love to copy others, so provide items for dress-up and role-play.*  
*Allow the child to sometimes play by themselves, without interference, so that they learn to entertain themselves.* | Give simple two-part directions related to everyday routines throughout the day for toddlers to listen and follow. Use pronouns purposefully when talking to toddlers rather than proper names (e.g., “You can do it.”) Engage toddlers in more sophisticated conversations as they acquire increased understanding of verbs, pronouns, and complex sentence structures using clauses (if, first, then, after, before, when) and conjunctions (and, but). | *Describe toddlers’ facial expressions or gestures with words.*  
*Provide labels for the things toddlers are interested in; use verbs to label actions; use adjectives to describe things. Toddlers need to hear language throughout the day many times before they are ready to use it on their own.*  
*Encourage toddlers to say, “Where?” if they indicate a question about the location of something by using an arm gesture or quizzical look.*  
*Encourage toddlers to be curious by modeling the question “What’s that?” and then naming it for the toddlers. Listen attentively as toddlers attempt to communicate and help provide words for their experiences. Expand language by adding more information for toddlers to hear. If toddler says “Mommy?” the adult may add, “Mommy went to work.”*  
*Repeat words correctly for toddlers to hear but do not make them imitate the words. Improper grammar is developmentally appropriate (e.g., “Me go!”)
3 to 4 Years
At this stage toddlers are beginning to talk in sentences and sometimes say things in a big and definite voice. Toddlers are full of zest for active learning in all domains. They are proud to share their accomplishments with adults and spend as much time as possible playing with adults, which is their best way of learning. Peers become more interesting, which leads to early conflicts and increased demands to learn how to regulate emotions. Caregivers and parents must give time to let children attempt solutions to problems and laugh with every new discovery (Infants and Toddlers, Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood). The three to four year old is moving out of babyhood into childhood. They are at the beginning of learning how to get on with others, and can control their feeling better (although they are likely to have the odd tantrum) (Better Health Channel).

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<td>The three or four year old understands simple “Who?”, “What?” and “Where?” questions, and can hear you when you call from another room. This is an age where hearing difficulties may become evident. If you are in doubt about a child's hearing, see a clinical audiologist.</td>
<td>Sentences are becoming longer as the children can combine four or more words. They talk about things that have happened away from home, and are interested in talking about preschool, friends, outings, and interesting experiences. Speech is usually fluent and clear and “other people” can understand what your child is saying most of the time. If stuttering occurs, see a speech language pathologist. Stuttering is not a normal part of learning to talk, and neither is persistent hoarseness. (Bowen, C. 1998)</td>
<td>Allow plenty of physical activities. Provide simple games with rules so the children can learn the basis of cooperative play. Provide music, songs, picture and story-books, and plenty of opportunities for drawing and painting. Give them lots of love, fun, approval and encouragement.</td>
<td>Talk to older toddlers about body parts and ask them to point to parts as you name them. Use playtime and/or songs to involve older toddlers’ names. Ask older toddlers to follow directions with more than one part such as “Go get the ball and give it to your friend.” (2 Steps) Use number words whenever there is an opportunity for counting such as during snack time or when playing with blocks. Use varied and rich descriptions and language with older toddlers.</td>
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Language Acquisition

Learning a language requires meaningful interaction in the target language. Natural communication occurs when speakers are concerned with the messages they are conveying and understanding and not with the form of their utterances. Language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules, and does not require tedious drills. Linguist and educator Stephen Krashen describes the best methods as being those that supply 'comprehensible input' in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear. Caroline Bowen suggests that language acquisition is partly innate and partly learned, as children interact with other people and the environment (Bowen, 1998). Young children acquire language quickly when they are in a stimulating environment with varied hands-on experiences that gently support their language learning.

Creating an Environment for Young Language Learners

- Be attentive. Carefully watch and listen to infants and toddlers. Join in on their conversations.

- Pay attention to all the child's communicative signals.

- Respond naturally with enthusiasm. Show a willingness to communicate.

- Have parent information and children's books in the language for the child's family.

- Sing songs, use rhymes and play music in the language.

- A young child learning two languages will often speak words from both languages, even in the same sentence. This is normal and will gradually disappear as the child becomes familiar with the language.

- Support all attempts at speech. It takes years to achieve grammatically proficient speech with native-like pronunciation. Encouragement and acceptance will foster communication.
Stages of Language Acquisition

The order in which language is learned parallels that of a newborn baby. First, children need ample time just listening to the language. They need many opportunities for developing comprehension. The second stage of speaking requires extended practice before a speaker will feel competent enough to converse. Before starting development of reading and writing a certain amount of competency in comprehension and speaking is required.

1. Comprehension
- Always use visual aids (pictures, objects, gestures)
- Adjust your speech to assist comprehension: speak slower, emphasize key words, simplify vocabulary and grammar
- Communication should be about what is present and happening at the moment
- Don’t force children to speak. They will speak when they are ready.
- Use repetition, whole sentences and modelling to aid understanding.

2. Speaking
- Early speech contains many errors
- Forcing speech only increases errors and encourages responses in English
- Expect a period of between one to six months before children will attempt speaking
- The normal states of early speech production is:
  * yes/no answers
  * one-word answers
  * two or three word phrases
- Some ways to encourage more speech production
  * Yes/No production - Is John wearing a shirt?
  * Either/Or questions - Is this a cup or a spoon?
  * General questions - What do I have in my hand?
  * Pausing for response - I have a blue shirt but Jen has a _______shirt.
3. Reading and Writing

In general, language nests do not need to specifically focus on the development of reading and writing skills. However, early development of preliteracy skills supports later reading and writing acquisition. By providing a language-rich environment with stimulating activities you can do a lot to support literacy development.

- Children need to fully understand words before being able to read or write with comprehension.
- Pattern books and predictable books provide plenty of repetition for beginner learners.
- Building a sight vocabulary can begin with simple word recognition of labels and chart stories. A large sight vocabulary is very important for successful reading.
- Once a book or story is familiar have the children practice filling in the missing words or change the story. Encourage creativity and storytelling.
- Create group stories and retell chorally.
- Use props, puppets and real objects to make a story more interesting.
- Combine books with song. Music has been shown to assist in language development.