

Tracking Development of Conversational Competence

Stage One establishes the basic conversation set. Children learn to initiate conversations, respond to initiations and take turns within conversation. Following this, they learn to introduce and maintain topics by commenting, requesting, answering and acknowledging. These conversational turns are expressed using one-, two-, and three-word utterances. Instruction will make provision for the child to acquire each of these semantic categories and semantic relationships to serve the conversational objectives.

Child's Name _____ Date _____ Completed by _____

STAGE ONE

P = Present in Use E = Emerging N = Not Present

Student action:	Examples:	PEN
1. Spontaneously initiate conversations with others and respond to the initiations of others.	S: "Hi." T: "Hi." S: "Johnny." T: "What?"	
2. Take turns within conversation.	T: "Hi." S: "Hi." T: "How are you?" S: "Fine. How are you?" T: "Fine."	
3a. Spontaneously introduce topics by commenting. b. Spontaneously introduce topics by requesting.	a. "I go store." "Look. New shoes." b. "Play outside?" "Where mommy?"	
4a. Maintain topics by acknowledging. b. Maintain topics by answering. c. Maintain topics by commenting. d. Maintain topics by requesting.	a. T: "That's pretty." S: "Thank you." T: "Look at that big tree." S: "Yeah." b. T: "Where is your lunch box?" S: "There." T: "Do you have your money?" S: "Yes." c. T: "I have a new puppy at home." S: "I have puppy." T: "I like apple juice." S: "I not like." d. T: "Johnny is not here today." S: "Johnny sick?" T: "Mary hurt her knee." S: "What happened?"	

Semantic Relationships in Stage One Conversational Skills

Existence – "That one."	Agent and object – "Daddy car."	Action and instrument – "Sweep broom."
Recurrence – "More juice."	Action and location – "Go store."	Agent, action, object – "Daddy hit ball."
Non existence – "No ball. Allgone milk."	Entity and location – "Ball here."	Agent, action, location – "I go store."
Denial – "No do."	Attribute and entity – "Big boy."	Action, object, location – "Put cookie there."
Rejection – "No car."	Experiencer and process – "I like."	Experiencer, process, object – "I want milk."
Agent and action - "Mommy go."	Process and entity – "Want ball."	
Action and object - "Push car."	Action and recipient – "Give mommy."	

Stages defined by Stone, P. (1988) Blueprint for developing conversational competence: A planning/instruction model with detailed scenarios. Washington, DC: Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf.

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Stage Two adds additional initiation routines and calls for their use with a wider variety of persons. Three-word utterances are used to request information and beginning clarification requests are introduced. Basic skill with extended turns is acquired along with beginning use of pronouns and articles. The aspects of linguistic form to be incorporated include early forms of negation; conjoining with "and" simple relative clauses and infinitives; and some aspects of noun and verb phrases.

Child's Name _____ Date _____ Completed by _____

STAGE TWO

P = Present in Use E = Emerging N = Not Present

Student action:	Examples:	PEN
1. Initiate conversations with a wide variety of other persons using the routines acquired in Stage One. Initiate conversations using various expressions.	"Good morning." "Hello Mary."	
2. Take multiple turns around topics introduced by self and others.		
3a. Request information by using three-word utterances with rising inflection. b. Request information by using WH- questions.	a. "Mommy go store." "I play outside?" b. "What Johnny doing?" "Where Johnny going?" "Who is that?"	
4. Request clarification at appropriate times during conversation.	"What?" "Pardon me."	
5. Produce narratives within conversation which include the primary characters and a series of actions.	"Me and Mommy go to store. Mommy drive car. Buy cookies. Go home."	
6. Produce explanations within conversations which are made up of a series of actions.	"Pour in milk. Put powder in. Stir up. Put in refrigerator."	
7. Produce simple directions using a variety of locative terms.	"Go over there." "Go down stairs."	
8. Produce descriptions which include only distinctive features using a variety of adjectives.	"I want blue ball." (versus red one) "See my new shoes?" (versus old ones)	
9. Use pronouns (I, she, he, we, it, they) to indicate old information. Use "the" to signal old information and "a" to signal new information.		

Syntactic Constructions and Morphologic Markers used to Express **Stage Two** Conversational Skills

Negation – "no, not, can't, don't."

Conjoining – "and" to join words and successive clauses.

Relative clause – Attach a specifier clause to an indefinite form. "That thing I bought." "The one you have."

Infinitive – Used with "have" and "want." "I want to see." "I have to go."

Verb phrase – Present progressive with some verbs. Regular and irregular past used inconsistently.

Copula verbs "was" and "am." Auxiliaries "will" "can" "-s."

Noun phrase – Possessive pronouns – "my" "mine" "your(s)." Demonstrative pronouns – "this" "that."

Possessive nouns using "-s."

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Stage Three expands initiation by introducing idiomatic expressions and increasing the number of persons engaged in conversation. Requests for information are expanded and refined and requests for clarification become more specific. The extended turns become longer, more complete and cohesive. Earlier acquired linguistic forms are refined and expanded; adverbial and noun clauses are introduced.

Child's Name _____ Date _____ Completed by _____

STAGE THREE

P = Present in Use E = Emerging N = Not Present

Student action:	Examples:	PEN
1. Initiate conversations using idiomatic expressions. Initiate conversations with new persons using appropriate routines.	"How's it goin'?" "Guess what?"	
2. Carry on extended conversations of multiple turns with teacher and/or peers using all of the conversational intents.		
3. Request information using yes-no questions with the auxiliary inverted. Request information using WH- questions.	"Am I going?" "Can I have it?" "Do you like it?" "Where is Johnny going?" "What for?" "Why are you here?" "How come?"	
4. Request clarification using more polite forms.	"What did you say?" "Pardon me?" "I didn't hear you."	
5. Produce narratives which include all elements of the setting, a problem or goal statement, one or more episodes and a resolution. Some time and causal connectors are present.	"Last Saturday my family went to the beach. We wanted to see whales. We watched for a long time but didn't see any. Then we ate our lunch and came home."	
6. Produce explanations which include an organizing statement, materials and sequence of actions. Some time and causal connectors are present.	"I will show you how. First, everybody has seven cards. I ask for card that I have. You give me the card. If you don't have card then you say "Go fish."	
7. Produce directions which have a clear point of origin and use a variety of locative terms.	"Go down the hall to the blue door. Go outside. Walk across the playground and then go in the red door. Turn right. There is the gym."	
8. Produce descriptions which include all distinctive features and use "with phrases" and a variety of descriptive terms.	"I got a new dress. It is red with white stripes. It has long sleeves and big white buttons. And it has a big collar."	
9. Expand use of pronouns to indicate old information. Expand use of articles to signal old and new information.		

Syntactic Constructions and Morphologic Markers used to Express Stage Three Conversational Skills

Negation – won't, doesn't, isn't, aren't, didn't, couldn't, never.

Conjoining – words, clauses joined using "but" and "or"

Relative clause – Attach a specifier clause to the object of the main clause: "I got the book that you wanted."

Adverbial clause – Time expressed by "when," "before" and "after." "After school we are going to play."

Causal relationships expressed by "because" and "so." "She put on her coat because it was cold."

Conditional relationships expressed by "if." "If you want more candy ask Mom."

Infinitive - used with various process verbs. "I want to buy a new coat." "I like to ski."

Noun clause – Introduced by "that" "where" "what" "who." "I wish that I could go." "She heard what he said."

Verb phrase – Regular past forms used consistently. Past progressive. Copula – "is," "are," "were," "was" and contracted forms.

Auxiliaries – "am going" to indicate future as in "I am going to the ball game tomorrow."

Noun phrase – Possessive pronouns "his" "her." Demonstrative pronouns "these" "those." Comparative and superlative adjectives – "bigger" "biggest."

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Stage Four is the final step in acquisition of conversational competence. Requests for information are expanded and requests for clarification become very specific. The extended turns become complete and additional complex linguistic forms are added.

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STAGE FOUR

P = Present in Use E = Emerging N = Not Present

Student action:	Examples:	PEN
1. Initiate conversations using routines appropriate to the age and status of the intended partner.		
2. Introduce topics that are of high interest to the conversational partner.		
3a. Requesting information using yes/no tag questions. b. Requesting information using WH-questions.	a. "They finished their work, didn't they?" b. "What if we go?" "What do you want?"	
4 Request clarification using specific requests.	"Where did you go?" "What time did you say?"	
5. Produce narratives that are complete using extensive time and causal connectors.	"During August my brother and I are going to Boy Scout Camp for three days. I'm so excited because I can earn more merit badges. When we get there we have to find a place for our tent. Then we put it up and ask the Scoutmaster to check it out. After lunch we can choose what badges to work on. Then we work on them for three days and have fun too."	
6. Produce complete explanations for activities that are removed from school, in which no props are present and that incorporate extensive connectors and a variety of verbs.	"Well, it's really easy to do. First decide how much ground you have and what you want to plant. Then, dig up the ground you want to use and make it very soft. After that rake up all the rocks. When you're finished smooth it out. Now you are ready to plant your seeds."	
7. Produce a complete set of directions for a destination far removed from the beginning point that incorporate a variety of locative terms and connectors.	"It's easy to get to my house from school. Go up Abbott Street to Calhoun. Turn left and go to the first stoplight which is Dundee Boulevard. Go right on Dundee and look for the sign for I-205. Go on 205 across the bridge and take the third exit."	
8. Produce clear descriptions which relate two or more dimensions incorporating a variety of descriptive terms.	"Well, he is about six feet tall with dark brown hair and blue eyes. He was wearing a blue sport coat and gray slacks with a white shirt and striped tie. He drove away in a blue sports car."	

Syntactic Constructions and Morphologic Markers used to Express **Stage Four** Conversational Skills

Conjoining – words, clauses joined by using "either – or" and "neither – nor"

Relative clause – embed a specifier clause after the subject of the main clause, with the WH word replacing the subject of the embedded clause. "The boy that is playing is my brother."

Attach a specifier clause to the object of the main sentence with the WH word replacing the subject of the attached clause. "She petted the dog that was barking."

Adverbial clause - Time relationships expressed by "while" and "since." "While everyone is cleaning up I'll get the balls."

Causal relationships expressed by "therefore." "Your report is late therefore you will not get credit for it."

Conditional relationships expressed by "unless." "We cannot leave unless you are on time."

Infinitive – used following an adjective. "They were smart to leave." Used when the subjects in each clause are different. "I want you to go home." Used as a subject. "To win this race you must start out fast."

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