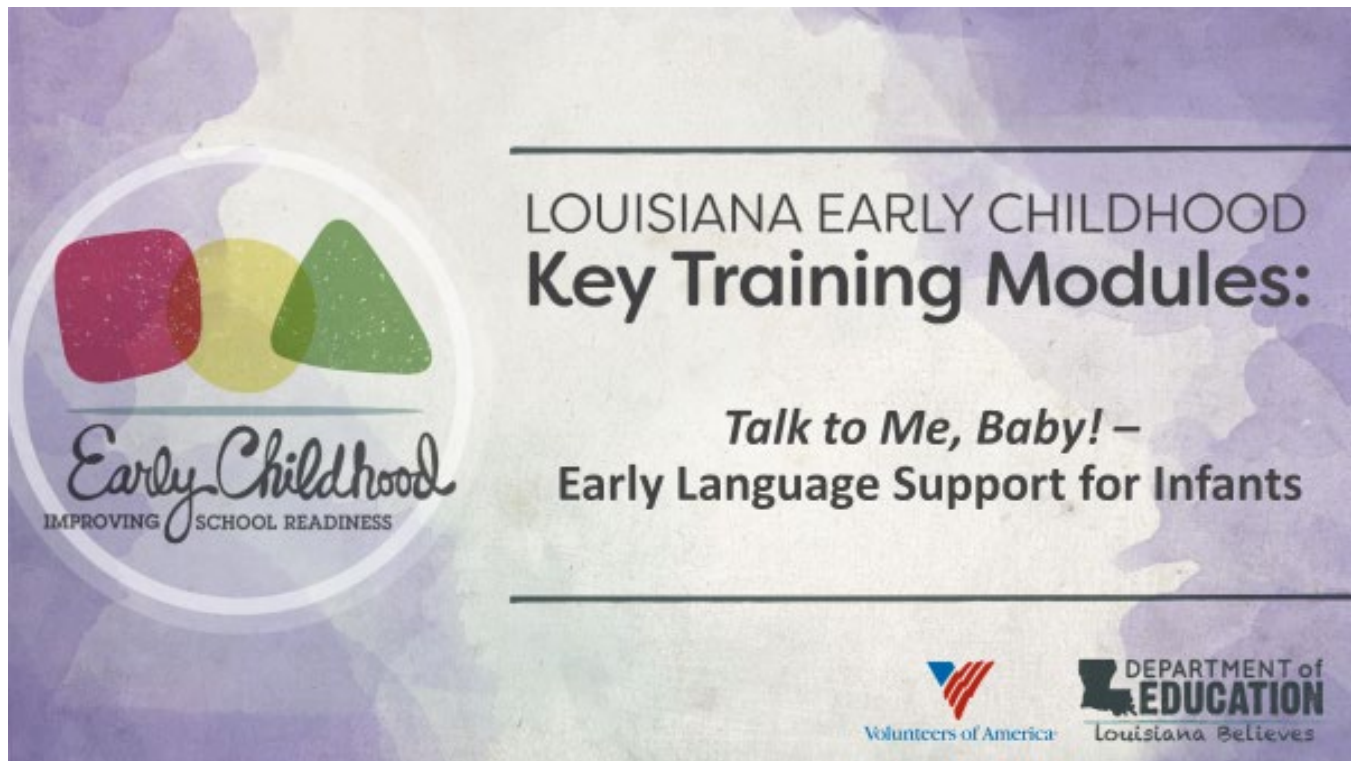


Module 2B: Outline & Manual

Talk to Me, Baby! – Early Language Support for Infants

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Module Description

This 2-hour interactive training module is designed for full-time, assistant, or floater teachers in infant classrooms or for directors of centers with infant classrooms, to help them provide high-level Early Language Support in infant classrooms. The session includes information about developmentally-appropriate language-related expectations for infants from Louisiana's Birth to Five Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) and Teaching Strategies *GOLD*® as well as information about the Infant CLASS® Tool.

Materials

- Chart paper and markers
- Note paper
- Copy paper
- Mirrors
- Pencils or pens for participants
- Handouts
 - *Pre- and Post-Assessment*
 - *Reflecting on Your Care of Infants and Learning About Developmentally-Appropriate Expectations*
 - *TS GOLD® Objectives 9-10 Color Band Activity*
 - *TS GOLD® Objectives 8-10 Color Band Takeaway*
 - *3-2-1 Action Plan*

Learning Outcomes

Candidates who actively participate in this session will be able to...

- Review the Early Language Support dimension of the Infant CLASS® tool
- Identify what Early Language Support looks and sounds like at a high level in an infant classroom
- Identify what materials can most effectively support Early Language in an infant classroom
- Describe and apply practical strategies for implementing elements of Teacher Talk, Communication Support, and Communication Extension in an infant classroom
- Introduce how these Early Language Support strategies in turn connect to Facilitated Exploration, Relational Climate, and Teacher Sensitivity in the Infant CLASS® tool

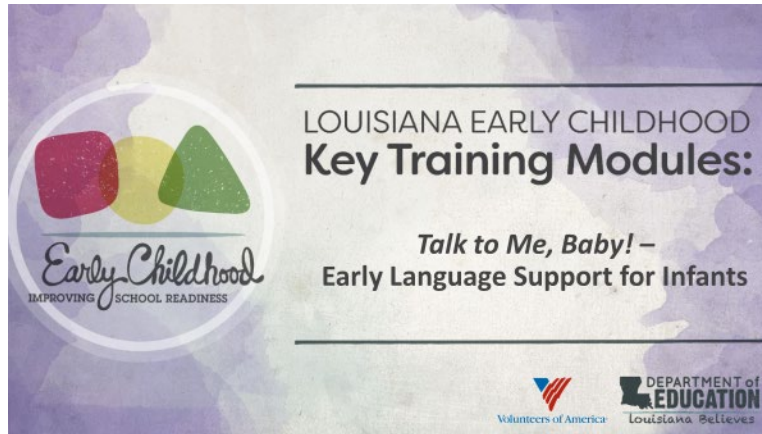
Training Agenda

Total Content Time: 2.0 hours

Total Session Time: 3.0 hours

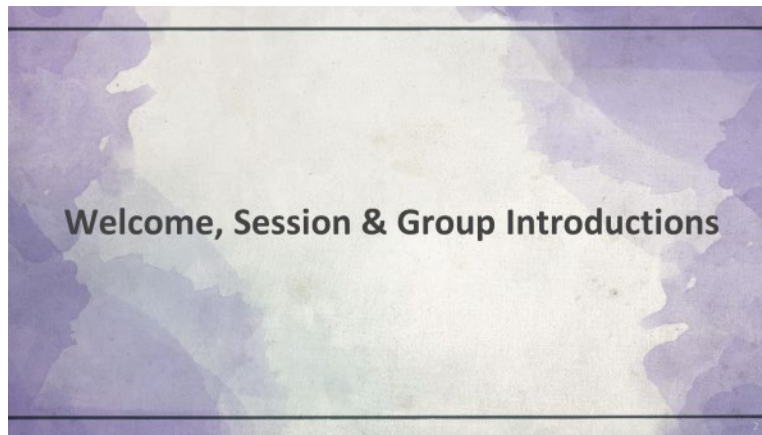
Item	Time/Duration
Registration/Sign-In	30 minutes prior to course start <i>(not included in total course time)</i>
Welcome, Session & Group Introductions	20 minutes
Developmentally-Appropriate Language-Related Expectations for Infants	20 minutes
Overview of Infant CLASS® Tool Early Language Support Dimension	25 minutes
What Early Language Support Looks and Sounds Like at a High Level	20 minutes
Materials That Most Effectively Support Early Language in the Infant Classroom and How	20 minutes
How Early Language Support Strategies Connect to Other Infant CLASS® Tool Dimensions	15 minutes
Session Closing & Post-Assessment	15 minutes <i>(not included in total course time)</i>
Individualized Q&A	15 minutes following course completion <i>(not included in total course time)</i>

Training Manual



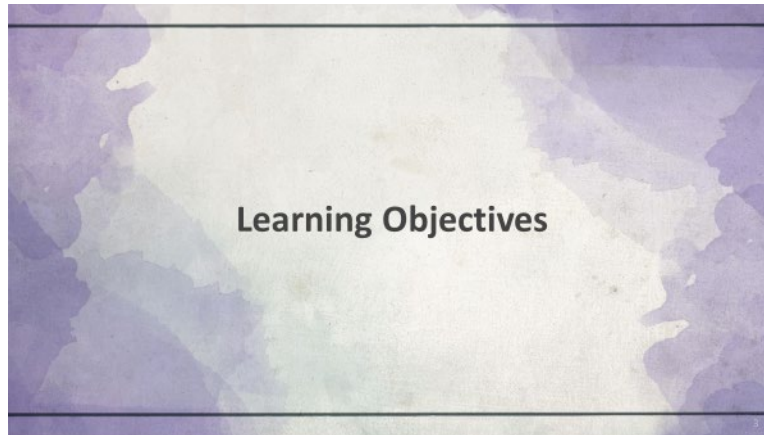
Distribute the Pre-Assessment Evaluation as participants enter the training.

- *Ask them to complete the Pre-Assessment Evaluation and return to you*
- *Briefly review the forms to identify the group's needs*
- *Emphasize the learning objective(s) identified by the group as needing support*
- *Modify the session to spend more time on knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by the group*



Introduce yourself and the session.

Welcome to today's training entitled "Talk to Me, Baby!" about Early Language Support for Infants.



Let's take a look at our learning objectives today.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Review the Early Language Support dimension of the Infant CLASS® tool
- Identify what Early Language Support looks and sounds like at a high level in an infant classroom
- Identify what materials can most effectively support Early Language in an infant classroom
- Describe and apply practical strategies for implementing elements of Teacher Talk, Communication Support, and Communication Extension in an infant classroom
- Introduce how these Early Language Support strategies in turn connect to Facilitated Exploration, Relational Climate, and Teacher Sensitivity in the Infant CLASS® tool

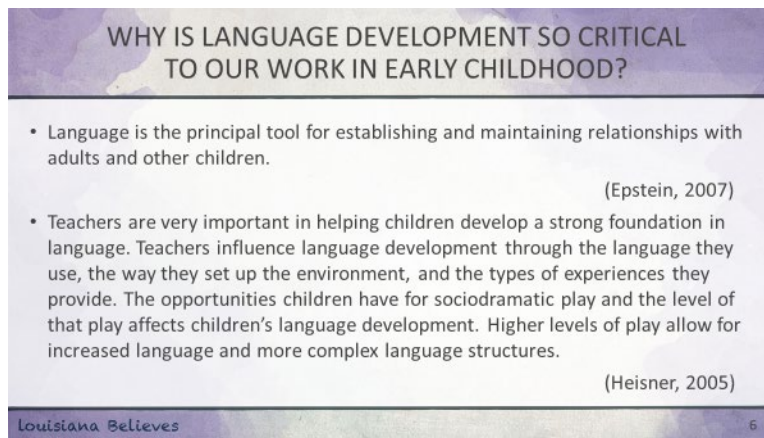
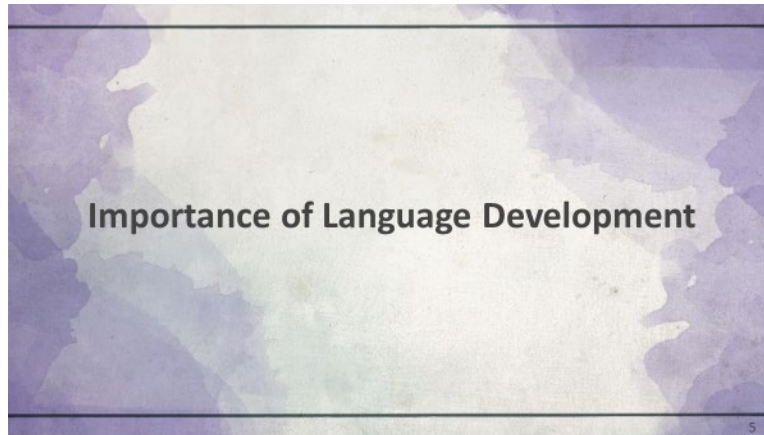
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Read each learning objective aloud.

- **Review the Early Language Support dimension of the Infant CLASS® tool**
- **Identify what Early Language Support looks and sounds like at a high level in an infant classroom**
- **Identify what materials can most effectively support Early Language in an infant classroom**
- **Describe and apply practical strategies for implementing elements of teacher talk, communication support, and communication extension in the Infant classroom**
- **Introduce how these Early Language Support strategies in turn connect to Facilitated Exploration, Relational Climate, and Teacher Sensitivity in the Infant CLASS® tool**

Are there any additional points we should add to our list of objectives for today?

Record responses on chart paper.



Why is language development so critical to our work in early childhood?

- **Language is the principal tool for establishing and maintain relationships with adults and other children.**
- **Teachers are very important in helping children develop a strong foundation in language. Teachers influence language development through the language they use, the way they set up the environment, and the types of experiences they provide.**
- **The opportunities children have for sociodramatic play and the level of that play affects children’s language development. Higher levels of play allow for increased language and more complex language structures.**

How do you feel about these statements? Does any of this surprise or resonate with you? *Pause 2-3 minutes for group responses.*

WHY IS LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SO CRITICAL TO OUR WORK IN EARLY CHILDHOOD?

- Early language skills form the basis for concept and literacy skills which in turn form the basis of lifelong learning in all areas.
- Our language ability when entering school is a greater predictor of our overall long-term academic success than any other.
- Our language ability is a predictor not only of our future academic success in that subject, but across all subject areas.
- Language skills correlate to executive function skills as well.

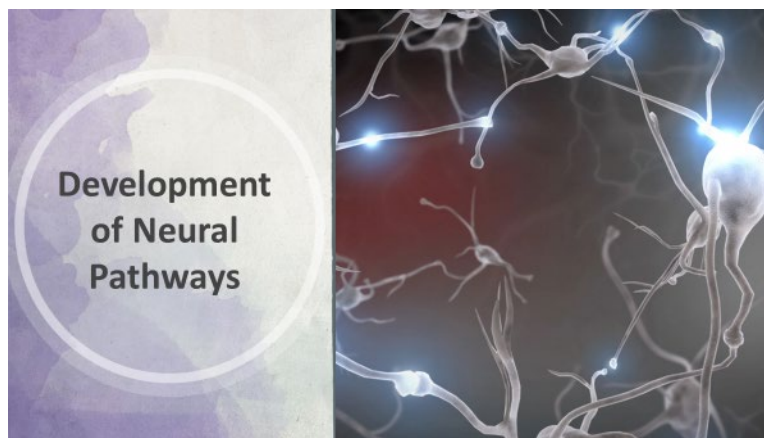
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In addition,

- **Early language skills form the basis for concept and literacy skills which in turn form the basis of lifelong learning in all areas.**
- **Our language ability when entering school is a greater predictor of our overall long-term academic success than any other.**
- **Our language ability is a predictor not only of our future academic success in that subject, but across all subject areas.**
- **Language skills correlate to executive function skills as well.**

Executive function skills allow and enable us to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully, and are critical for long-term life success.



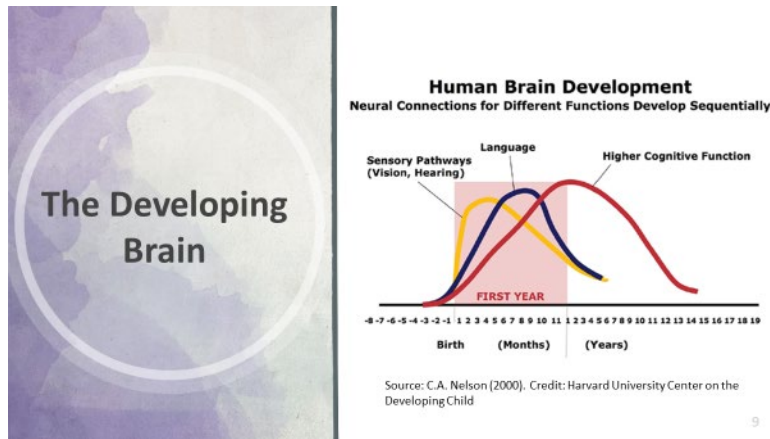
So, we agree that supporting language development is very important in our work in early childhood.

But why is it equally, or even more important, to begin the work of early language support in our infant care specifically?

90% of our brain develops by age 5. That development includes not only the size of our brains but also the architecture of our brains – the neural pathways, seen here in this image, that form the basis for how we connect and process information.

Our language development forms the foundation for our higher cognitive development.

Let's take a look at another image representing brain development.



Take a look at this diagram from Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child. This diagram illustrates the development of those neural pathways we saw in the last slide.

The Language Development arc is the blue line in the middle of the diagram.

At what age do you see that the development of those language neural connections peak? *Pause for participants to review and answer.*

Point out that, even though language development continues after that and remains important after that, the peak takes place in the first year of life.

Too often in the past the most important component of infant care, in particular, has been viewed by many parents and other caregivers as rocking and "babysitting" to keep the infant safe from harm.

As we have just seen, however, language development begins at birth, and because many people do not realize this, many children do not receive the ongoing experiences that support the development of this critical foundation. We can change this together!



So now that we know the importance of early language support for infants, let's talk about **developmentally-appropriate language-related experiences for infants**.

At this point participants will engage in a pair-and-share activity.

Please take a few minutes to reflect with the person next to you and share what you know to be developmentally-appropriate language expectations for infants. Think of as many words, actions, and phrases that come to mind.

On the CLASS® tool, infants can be measured all the way up through 15 months, so remember that there could be a wide range of responses when you take into account a 6-week-old infant versus a 15-month-old infant.

Pause 2-3 minutes for training participants to reflect and talk together – prepare to use flip chart or whiteboard.

Now let's share what words, actions, and phrases you came up with that are developmentally-appropriate language expectations for infants.

Take time to write down all the answers called out by the pairs. Try to get at least ten responses.

We will refer back to this list as we “check our knowledge” about two different tools we can use to ensure that our expectations are age-appropriate.

Trainer Note: This list is very important, as you will be referring back to it for most of the first half of the training.

DEVELOPMENTALLY-APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE EXPECTATIONS FOR INFANTS

The *Louisiana Birth to Five Early Learning & Development Standards (ELDS)* state:

“Children enter the world with the capacity to communicate. Before babies utter their first words, they are preparing to use language in many ways. As children grow and change, however, their communication needs change as well. Communicating with a preschooler is very different than communicating with a toddler or an infant. Infants and toddlers are learning the basics of communication and how important it is.”

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Poll participants to see who is familiar with the Louisiana Birth to Five Early Learning & Development Standards and to see who has completed training about the Standards.

Trainer Note: *Depending on the responses from participants, you might say:*

Remember that LouisianaBelieves.com is the website that centers and teachers can use to review the Louisiana Birth to Five Early Learning & Development Standards, also known as the Standards or ELDS, and access trainings as well as other information on Licensing regulations, Tier 1 curricula, CLASS®, and many other resources pertaining to early childhood and best practices.

The Louisiana Birth to Five Early Learning & Development Standards acknowledge that children enter the world with the capacity to communicate. That is seen when, for example, infants begin to cry when they are wet, hungry, etc. as a means to get their needs met. The Standards also acknowledge that as children grow and change, so do their communication needs.

LOUISIANA’S BIRTH TO FIVE EARLY LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS (ELDS)

INFANTS (Birth to 11 months)

- (0.1) Show interest in adult speech
- (0.2) Look in the direction of sound
- (0.3) Recognize words for familiar items
- (0.4) Engage in turn-taking
- (0.5) Coo when spoken to
- (0.6) Smile in response to social stimulation
- (0.7) Know own name by responding when name is spoken
- (0.8) Respond to the sound of language and the steady rhythm of words
- (0.9) Get attention or express needs through sound, facial expressions, and movements
- (0.10) Imitate different sounds

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You can refer to Louisiana’s Birth to Five Early Learning & Development Standards (ELDS) for the standards across all age groups, but we’re going to focus on infants and young toddlers.

Trainer Note: *Depending on the responses listed from the participants’ pair-and-share activity about developmentally-appropriate expectations for infants, you might say –*

Let's look at how your responses match the ELDS "Language and Literacy Development Standard LL1 – Comprehend or understand and use language" found within the Subdomain "Speaking and Listening."

Infants (Birth to 11 months)

- **Show interest in adult speech**
- **Look in direction of sound**
- **Recognize words for familiar items (such as "cup" or "bottle")**
- **Engage in turn-taking**
- **Coo when spoken to**
- **Smile in response to social stimulation**
- **Know own name by responding when name is spoken**
- **Respond to the sound of language and the steady rhythm of words**
- **Get attention or express needs through sound, facial expressions, and movements**
- **Imitate different sounds**

Note how these may match responses from the pair-and-share activity. Consider making the relevant participant responses with a symbol or color to show and highlight the younger infant expectations.

Next let's look at expectations for older infants, or "young toddlers."

Notice some of the subtle differences between what the Standards classify as "infants" and "young toddlers" and how they overlap for a couple of months because infants progress at their own pace. Also notice how the expectations for older infants, classified in the Standards as "young toddlers," build upon the development expectations of young infants.

LOUISIANA'S BIRTH TO FIVE EARLY LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS (ELDS)

YOUNG TODDLERS (9 to 18 months)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1.1) Attend to adult language • (1.2) Respond to adult's facial expressions • (1.3) Identify familiar people or objects when asked • (1.4) Follow simple commands • (1.5) Use facial expressions to show excitement or distress • (1.6) Use gestures and words to communicate needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1.7) Repeat familiar words • (1.8) Respond to simple rhymes and fingerplays • (1.9) Use hand gestures to show recognition of a song • (1.10) Use 1-2 words to communicate so that communication is understood by family and familiar adults most of the time
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Young Toddlers (9-18 months)

- **Attend to adult language**
- **Respond to adult's facial expressions, such as stop throwing blocks after a stern look from an adult**
- **Identify familiar people or objects when asked**
- **Follow simple commands, such as "come here"**
- **Use facial expression to show excitement or distress**
- **Use gestures to communicate needs**
- **Repeat familiar words**

- Respond to simple rhymes and fingerplays
- Use hand gestures to show recognition of song
- Use one to two words to communicate, to ask questions or signal needs, so that the communication is understood by family and familiar adults most of the time

Note how these may match responses from the pair-and-share activity. Consider marking the relevant participant responses with a symbol or color to show and highlight the older infant expectations.

How do the expectations for older infants, classified in the Standards as “young toddlers,” build upon the developmental expectations of young infants? *Pause for responses.*

Trainer Note: Responses may include the development of additional, more advanced facial expressions, gestures, and words – imitating words rather than just sounds, etc.

LOUISIANA’S BIRTH TO FIVE EARLY LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS (ELDS)

Language: Comprehend and use increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.

Infants (Birth to 11 months)	Young Toddlers (9 – 18 months)
<p>LL 2 Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in brief moments of joint attention to imitate positional words through language, music and sounds. (0.1) • Recognize names of familiar people and objects. (0.2) • Use gestures and sounds to communicate needs. (0.3) 	<p>LL 2 Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate positional words with body movement or through gestures. (1.1) • Use words such as “mama” and “dada”. (1.2) • Attempt to say new word offered by an adult (e.g., “That is a bird, can you say bird?”). (1.3)

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Trainer Note: Depending on the responses charted from the participants pair-and-share activity, you might say –

Let’s look at how your responses match the ELDS “Language and Literacy Development Standard LL2 – Comprehend and use increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.”

Infants (Birth to 11 months)

- Engage in brief moments of joint attention to imitate positional words through language, music, and sounds
- Recognize names of familiar people and objects
- Use gestures and sounds to communicate needs

Young Toddlers (9-18 months)

- Demonstrate positional words with body movement or through gestures
- Use words such as “mama” and “dada”
- Attempt to say new word offered by an adult

Trainer Note: Referring to the charted responses submitted by the pair-and-share activity, you might say –

How have we done so far in matching up to the Louisiana Birth to Five Early Learning & Development Standards as they pertain to Language and Literacy for our infants? *Depending on time, allow for a little discussion.*

Depending on time, you may also poll participants: Do you know of another tool used in centers that you could refer to for developmentally-appropriate language expectations for infants?



Another tool you could use to check developmentally-appropriate language expectations for infants are the Teaching Strategies GOLD® “Objectives for Development and Learning.”

Poll participants as to “Who is familiar with TS GOLD®?” and “Who has actually completed observations on infants using this tool?” Pause for responses.

Teaching Strategies GOLD®, or TS GOLD®, is an observation-based assessment tool used in Louisiana early childhood classrooms. It is a research-based tool that supports effective teaching through a process of “ongoing observational assessment for all areas of development and learning” and helping “teachers see children’s development and learning as a progression across the whole of the early childhood years.” The TS GOLD® is divided into areas of learning called “Objectives.”

TS GOLD® Language Objectives are:

- **8 – Listens to and understands increasingly complex language**
- **9 – Uses language to express thoughts and needs**
- **10 – Uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills**

Let’s take a look at each of these objectives to see how our list from the pair-and-share activity compares.

TS GOLD® OBJECTIVE 8, DIMENSION A

a. Comprehends language

Not yet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		<p>Shows an interest in the speech of others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turns head toward people who are talking • Recognizes familiar voice before the adult enters the room • Looks at favorite toy when adult labels and points to it • Responds to own name 		<p>Identifies familiar people, animals, and objects when prompted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picks up cup when asked, "Where's your cup?" • Goes to sink when told to wash hands • Touches body parts while singing "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes." 		<p>Responds appropriately to specific vocabulary and simple statements, questions, and stories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finds his favorite illustration in a storybook when asked • Listens to friend tell about cut finger and then goes to the dramatic play area to get a Band-Aid® • Responds using gestures to compare the sizes of the three leaves 		<p>Responds appropriately to complex statements, questions, vocabulary, and stories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answers appropriately when asked, "How do you think the car would move if it had square wheels?" • Builds on ideas about how to fix the broken wagon • Acts out the life cycle of a butterfly after the teacher reads a story about it 	

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Trainer Note: Depending on the responses by participants in the poll, you might say –

For those of you familiar with TS GOLD®, remember that the red color band you see here is for the infants under 1, and the orange color band is for 1-2-year-olds, the yellow color band is for 2-3-year-olds, and so on. See how the color band for infants (red and some orange) overlap? This is because, as we know, children develop differently and at their own pace.

TS GOLD® Objectives 8, 9, and 10 deal with Language Development.

Objective 8 is "Listens to and understands increasingly complex language." Let's go through Dimension A of Objective 8, which is "comprehends language," to see how your charted responses match up for appropriate language expectations for infants.

Column 2, which shows the red and orange color bands, contains the Indicator "**shows an interest in the speech of others**" and, more specifically:

- **Turns head toward people who are talking**
- **Recognizes familiar voice before the adult enters the room**
- **Looks at favorite toy when adult labels and points to it**
- **Responds to own name**

Does that match what we charted before for both younger and older infants? *Pause for response/acknowledgement.*

Column 4, which shows the orange and yellow color bands, contains the Indicator "**identifies familiar people, animals, and objects when prompted**" and, more specifically:

- **Picks up cup when asked, "Where's your cup?"**
- **Goes to sink when told to wash hands**
- **Touches body parts while singing "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes"**

This column does not contain the red color band, so this would not be a developmentally-appropriate expectation for young infants, under age 1; rather, it shows that this would be a developmentally-appropriate expectation for some older infants and for toddlers, as the yellow color band represents ages 2-3.

TS GOLD® OBJECTIVE 8, DIMENSION B

b. Follows directions

Not Yet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		<p>Responds to simple verbal requests accompanied by gestures or tone of voice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waves when mother says, "Wave bye-bye," as she waves her hand Covers eyes when adult prompts, "Where's Lucy?" Drops toy when teacher extends hand and says, "Please give it to me." 		<p>Follows simple requests not accompanied by gestures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Throws trash in can when asked, "Will you please throw this away?" Puts the balls in the basket when told, "Put all the balls in the basket, please." Goes to cubby when teacher says, "It's time to put coats on to go outside." 		<p>Follows directions of two or more steps that relate to familiar objects and experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Washes and dries hands after being reminded about the hand-washing sequence Completes a sequence of tasks. "Get the book bin and put it on the table. Then bring the paper and crayons." 		<p>Follows detailed, instructional, multistep directions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows instructions for navigating a new computer program Follows teacher's guidance: "To feed the fish, first get the fish flakes. Open the jar and sprinkle a pinch of food on the water. Finally, put the lid on the jar and put it back on the shelf." 	

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Next let's go through Dimension B, "Follows directions," of Objective 8, to see how your charted responses match up for appropriate language expectations for infants.

You see that the red band starts in the "Not Yet" column as it may not be developmentally-appropriate based on the infant's age.

Column 2, which shows the red and orange color bands, contains the Indicator "**responds to simple verbal requests accompanied by gestures or tone of voice,**" and, more specifically, the examples:

- **Waves when mother says, "Wave bye-bye," as she waves her hand**
- **Covers eyes when adult prompts, "Where's Lucy?"**
- **Drops toy when teacher extends hand and says, "Please give it to me."**

Column 4, which shows the orange, yellow, and green color bands, contains the Indicator "**follows simple requests not accompanied by gestures**" and, more specifically, the examples:

- **Throws trash in can when asked, "Will you please throw this away?"**
- **Puts the balls in the basket when told, "Put all the balls in the basket, please."**
- **Goes to cubby when teacher says, "It's time to put coats on to go outside."**

This column does not contain the red color band, so this would not be a developmentally-appropriate expectation for young infants, under age 1; rather, it shows that this would be a developmentally-appropriate expectation for some older infants and for toddlers and some 3-year-olds, as the yellow color band represents ages 2-3 and the green color band represents ages 3-4.

TS GOLD® OBJECTIVE 9, DIMENSION A

a. Uses an expanding expressive vocabulary

Not Yet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		Vocalizes and gestures to communicate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coos and squeals when happy • Cries after trying several times to get toy just out of reach • Waves hands in front of face to push away spoon during a feeding • Uses hand gestures to sign or indicate "more" 		Names familiar people, animals, and objects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Says, "Nana," when grandmother comes into the room • Names the cow, horse, chicken, pig, sheep, and goat as she sees them on the trip to the farm 		Describes and tells the use of many familiar items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When making pancakes, says, "Here is the beater. Let me beat the egg with it." • Responds, "We used the big red umbrella so we both could get under it." 		Incorporates new, less familiar or technical words in everyday conversations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a communication device to say, "My bird went to the vet. He has a disease. He's losing his feathers." • Says, "I'm not sure I can put it together. It's complicated." 	

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Objective 9 is “Uses language to express thoughts and needs.” Dimension A of Objective 9 is “**Uses an expanding expressive vocabulary.**”

Column 2, which shows the red color band, contains the Indicator “**vocalizes and gestures to communicate**” and, more specifically, the examples of:

- **Coos and squeals when happy**
- **Cries after trying several times to get toy just out of reach**
- **Waves hands in front of face to push away spoon during a feeding**
- **Uses hand gestures to sing or indicate “more”**

Point out how these expectations match the chart of developmentally-appropriate expectations, for younger infants (under age 1).

Because, as we have discussed, children develop at their own pace, sometimes a child’s development does not fall within this color bands.

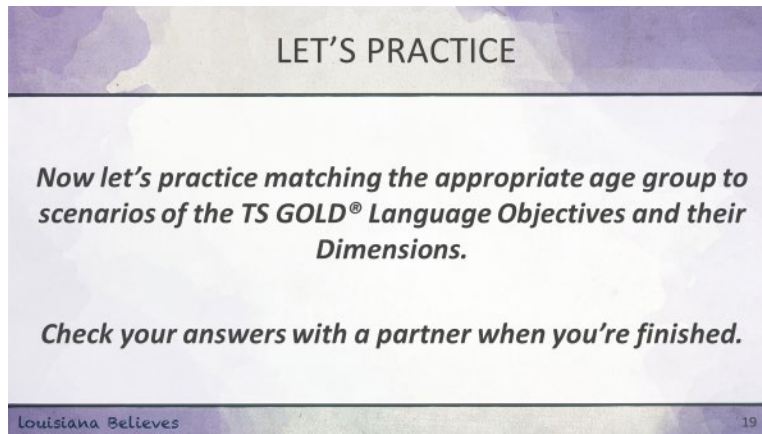
For example, if an older infant, aged 12-15 months, is *not* showing that Indicator or those Behavioral Markers, that child is exhibiting a developmental delay and may need additional supports in and out of the classroom, in order to achieve that level of development.

Column 4, which shows the orange and yellow color bands, contains the Indicator “**names familiar people, animals, and objects**” and, more specifically, the examples of:

- **Says “Nana,” when grandmother comes into the room**
- **Names the cow, horse, chicken, pig, sheep, and goat as she sees them on the trip to the farm**

This column does not contain the red color band, so this would not be a developmentally-appropriate expectation for young infants, under age 1; rather, it shows that this would be a developmentally-appropriate expectation for some older infants and for toddlers, as the yellow color band represents ages 2-3.

At the same time, if a 9-11-month-old infant said “Nana” when her grandmother entered the room, indicating that the infant is not merely babbling but recognizes her grandmother and that the infant knows who Nana is, that child would be developing, in that area of development, slightly ahead of the typical development for her peers.

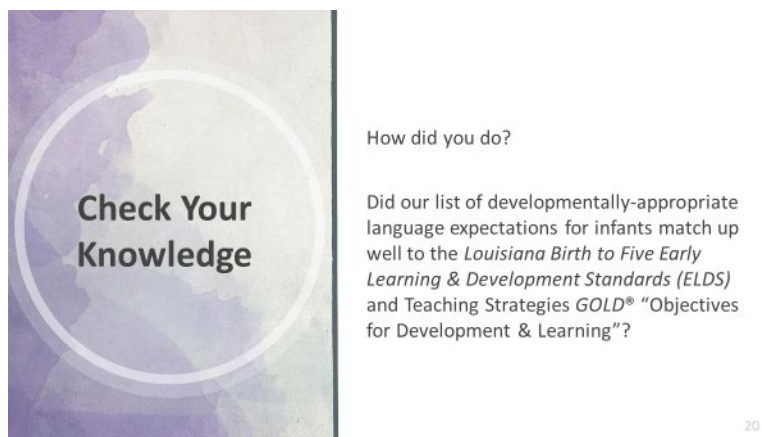


Now let's practice matching the appropriate age group to scenarios of the GOLD® Language Objectives and their Dimensions.

Distribute the TS GOLD® Objectives Matching Activity handout.

Instruct participants discuss with a partner to match age groups (either Birth to 1 Year or 1 to 2 Years) with the scenarios associated with different TS GOLD® Language Objectives and Dimensions.

As participants begin to finish, distribute the TS GOLD® Objectives Matching Activity Answers handout so they can check their answers.

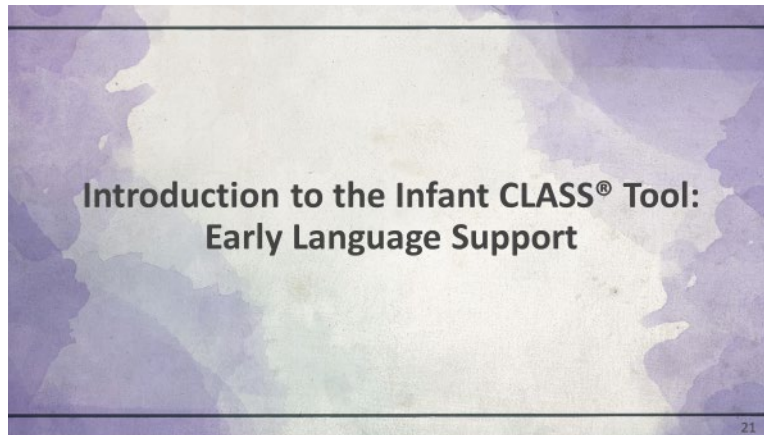


Poll participants with the following questions, allowing a time for discussion if time permits.

Well, how did everyone do?

Is there anything that surprised you?

Distribute the TS GOLD® Objectives 8-10 Color Band Takeaway handout either now or at the conclusion of the training, so that participants have it for follow-up review after leaving the training.



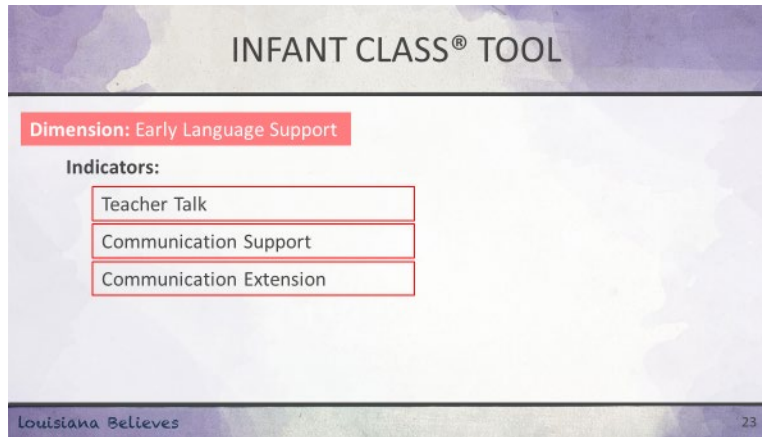
Now that we have reviewed and established what are developmentally-appropriate language-related expectations for infants, we are going to change gears a little and begin to talk about **Infant CLASS® tool**, specifically the **Early Language Support** portion of that tool. This information will help you understand developmentally-appropriate ways to support the early language development of the infants in your care.



How many of you are familiar with Toddler or Pre-K Class®?

Infant CLASS® is similar, in that it is, like Toddler and Pre-K CLASS®, divided into levels called “**Domains**” and “**Dimensions**.” Pre-K has three domains, Toddler has two domains, and Infant CLASS® has just one domain, **The Responsive Caregiver**, divided into four dimensions.

And, like the other CLASS® tools, many of these areas overlap.



The **Early Language Support Dimension** in the Infant CLASS® Tool “captures the amount and effectiveness of teachers’ use of language-stimulation and language-facilitation techniques to encourage infants’ early language development.”

The Early Language Support Dimension is divided further, into **Indicators** – these are **Teacher Talk, Communication Support, and Communication Extension**. When your interactions within your classroom are being observed, the observer is looking at the Dimension level, but then even more specifically at the Indicator level.

Under each Indicator is a series of “Behavioral Markers.” An observer looks for instances of these Behavioral Markers and the frequency of them when observing a classroom.

Let’s dive deeper into these three Infant Early Language Support Indicators, looking at the definitions for the Indicators, including the Behavioral Markers for each.



The Indicator **Teacher Talk** “reflects the consistency with which teachers provide language in the classroom.”

This means that in the infant classroom, you should:

- “Describe [your] own and infants’ actions during activities and routines [throughout the whole day],
- Comment on events happening in the classroom,
- [and use] language...[that] includes descriptive and variable words, spoken in complete sentences.”

Teacher Talk is broken down into four behavioral markers:

- **Self-talk,**
- **Describe classroom events,**
- **Verbally label objects, and**
- **Use complete and varied sentences.**

Self-talk means talking about yourself throughout the day, mapping all your actions during free play activities and during routines, and providing words for your actions. This should look the same for both younger and older infants

Describing classroom events means describing all classroom events, such as people entering or leaving room, a child waking up from nap, a child talking or crying because he or she is hungry or he or she dropped a pacifier – again providing words for actions taking place in the room. This should look the same for both younger and older infants.

Verbally labeling objects means using descriptive and specific words to label all objects in the room or items infants are playing with. When working with older infants, add in labeling regarding colors, shapes, numbers, etc.

Using complete and varied sentences means talking to the children in complete sentences, asking them questions, carrying on conversations with them as part of your interactions. This should look the same for both younger and older infants.

Why should we use “baby talk” with younger infants? Why should we use complete sentences even with younger infants? *Pause for responses. Point out the importance of teaching consistent, proper language structure.*



INFANT CLASS® TOOL

Behavioral markers: Self-talk, Verbally label objects

Examples:

- Changing a child, wiping a child's nose
- Picking up a child
- Giving a child a toy to play with

(A photograph of a baby lying in a crib is shown on the right side of the slide.)

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Examples of **self-talk** and **labeling** opportunities actually occur *every time you go to do something*. For example:

- **Every time you go to change a child or wipe a child's nose**, you can describe what you are doing, such as saying, “Alright, Maggie, I am coming to get you for a diaper change,” or “I need to wipe your nose, Will.”
- As you move to **pick up a child**, you can explain, “I am picking you up to give you a bottle.”
- When you **give a child a toy to play with**, you can label that toy, for example saying, “Here is a ball for you to play with.”

Note that you should state what you are doing as you begin and while you are doing it.

Also note that in those examples I just shared, I used **complete and varied sentences**, to help children begin hearing and getting comfortable with the structure of language communication.


For example, instead of merely saying, “wipe, wipe,” I said, “I need to wipe your nose, Will.”

INFANT CLASS® TOOL

Behavioral marker: Describe classroom events

Examples:

- Change in the classroom environment
- Someone enters the classroom
- Someone wakes up from a nap
- Someone is playing with a toy or making sounds
- Someone gets picked up in the afternoon



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Another behavioral marker under **Teacher Talk** is “**describing classroom events**,” which is similar to parallel talk in Toddler and Pre-K CLASS®.

Here are some opportunities to embed describing classroom events throughout the day:

- Whenever **there is a change in what is happening in the classroom environment**, such as by saying, “It is time to turn our lights out for nap time.”
- Whenever **someone enters the classroom, either in the morning at drop-off or mid-day**, such as by saying, “Look, Isaac is here today! Hi, Isaac.”
- Whenever **someone wakes up from a nap**, such as by saying, “Kennedy is waking up from nap. I see you, Kennedy.”
- Whenever **someone is playing with a toy or making other sounds**, such as by saying, “I hear Jamie shaking their rattle.”
- Whenever **someone gets picked up in the afternoon**, such as by saying, “Here is Dominic’s mom; it is time for him to go home today.”

Let’s Practice!

Remember that Teacher Talk means:

- Describing the teacher’s and infant’s actions,
- Describing classroom events,
- Verbally labeling objects, and
- Using complete and varied sentences.

First, let’s practice Teacher Talk while *diapering/changing* an infant.

Next, let’s practice Teacher Talk while *feeding* two infant age groups.

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Let’s practice how you can provide Early Language Support in routines such as diapering and feeding times.

One of the best time to practice and focus on Teacher Talk is when you are changing a child. Let's give this a try with one of our baby props.

Remember that Teacher Talk means self-talk (or describing you own and the infants' actions), describing classroom events, verbally labeling objects, and using complete and varied sentences.

Trainer Note: Activity Options

Depending on time and comfort level of training participants, this activity could be completed with the whole group, in small groups, or could first be practiced in small groups and then shared with the whole group.

Have some participants practice Teacher Talk during diapering, with some participants practicing with an infant between 6 weeks and 9 months, and others practicing with an infant between 9 and 15 months old. Have other participants describe the effective examples they saw of self-talk, describing classroom events, verbally labelling objects, and using complete and varied sentences in the volunteers' demonstration.

If activity is done in small group:

Walk around while participants work in small groups and give feedback to groups as they participate. You can also silently observe, making mental notes, and then share with the larger group best practices observed from the participants. After, it time permits and if participants are comfortable, some could model their practice before the whole group.

If activity is done in whole group:

Is anyone willing to volunteer to come up here and model Teacher Talk with diapering for us?

After the demonstration, have other training participants and yourself share other examples of how a teacher might exhibit Teacher Talk during diapering.

Next, let's practice Teacher Talk while feeding an infant.

Trainer Note: Activity Options

Depending on time and comfort level of training participants, this activity could be completed with the whole group, in small groups, or could first be practiced in small groups and then shared with the whole group.

Have some participants practice Teacher Talk during feeding, with some participants practicing with an infant between 6 weeks and 9 months, and others practicing with an infant between 9 and 15 months old. Have other participants describe the effective examples they saw of self-talk, describing classroom events, verbally labelling objects, and using complete and varied sentences in the volunteers' demonstration.

If activity is done in small group:

Walk around while participants work in small groups and give feedback to groups as they participate. You can also silently observe, making mental notes, and then share with the larger group best practices observed from the participants. After, it time permits and if participants are comfortable, some could model their practice before the whole group.

If activity is done in whole group:

Is anyone willing to volunteer to come up here and model Teacher Talk with feeding for us?

After the demonstration, have other training participants and yourself share other examples of how a teacher might exhibit Teacher Talk during feeding.



We have practiced how we can provide Early Language Support through Teacher Talk. Now, let's learn about another Indicator under the Early Language Support Dimension, called **Communication Support**.

Communication Support "captures teachers' initiation and/or repetition of sounds in direct interactions with infants." This means that in the infant classroom you should:

- "Encourage infants to verbalize by initiating sounds and words with [the] infants,
- [and] imitate sounds expressed by infants."

Communication support is important because it encourages infants to talk.

This Indicator is measured by two **behavioral markers**:

- **Initiate sounds or words**, and
- **Imitate or repeat sounds**.

This is where you make sounds, sound out words, and repeat sounds a baby says in back-and-forth exchanges.

From birth, babies begin to develop two sets of communication skills: receptive skills and expressive skills. Just like other ages, they learn by watching and listening to adults around them and then trying to imitate them.

Your Communication Support of your infants will help them develop both their receptive and their expressive skills.

INFANT CLASS® TOOL

Behavioral marker: Initiate sounds or words


Examples:

- Modeling mouth shape/formation

Behavioral marker: Imitate or repeats sounds

Examples:

- Back-and-forth exchanges



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Here are some **examples of opportunities** for **initiating sounds or words**.

A great way to do this with mirrors. How many of you have mirrors in your classroom? *Presenter models with mirrors – shows mouth shape/formation.*

For younger infants – make simple sounds, such as:

- Ooooo
- Bbbbbbbb

Older infants can make more complex like:

- Tongue clicking/clacking
- The sound of a motor, such as a vehicle

By doing this initiating with your Infants, simple sounds can develop into words as a child progresses to the next stage. For example, “bbb” can turn into “baby,” “bbb...bottle,” “bbb...ball,” “ddd...daddy,” “mmm...mama.” You can also initiate sounds or words with infants in response to the infants’ vocalizations, for example, you can say “ooh!” after an infant squeals with excitement.

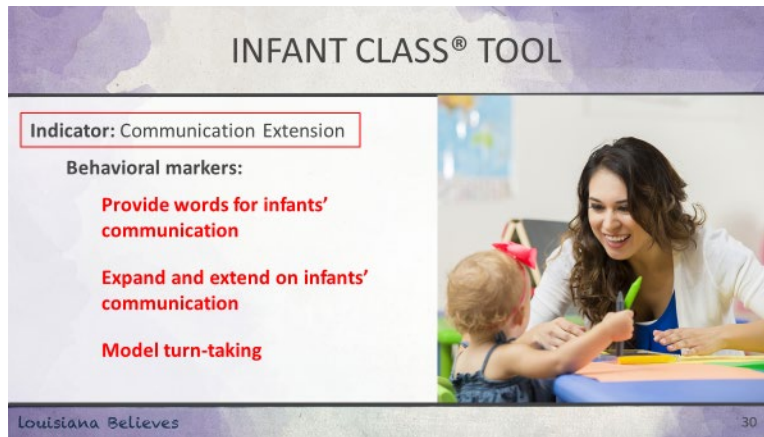
What else can you do or have seen done, to make sounds or initiate and sound out simple words? *Pause for participants to share.*

Here are some examples of ways to **imitate or repeat sounds** during activities or routines.

You can repeat the sounds a baby is making by simply saying it, like “uh, uh, uh.” You can also indicate to an infant that you are repeating the sounds he is making through a back-and-forth exchange.

A great way to work on imitation/repetition through **back-and-forth exchange** is with a rattle. You shake the rattle, and then you let the baby shake the rattle. *Presenter models using the rattle, shaking and pausing – creating rhythms.*

Imitating and repeating those rattle sounds help infants learning to imitate and repeat language sounds, too. Furthermore, in addition to Communication Support, this activity also gives you the opportunity to “label” action, saying something like, “Shake it,” thereby linking action with communication.



INFANT CLASS® TOOL

Indicator: Communication Extension

Behavioral markers:

- Provide words for infants' communication**
- Expand and extend on infants' communication**
- Model turn-taking**

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The third and final Indicator under the Dimension Early Language Support is **Communication Extension**.

Communication Extension “encompasses teachers’ efforts to extend communication attempts by adding words to actions and sounds and modeling turn-taking.” This means that in the infant classroom you should:

- “Extended infants’ communication attempts by adding words to actions and sounds,
- Engage in back-and-forth verbal exchanges with infants,
- [and] use pauses and eye contact to encourage turn taking.”

This Indicator is divided into three behavioral markers:

- **Provide words for infants’ communication,**
- **Expand and extend on infants’ communication,** and
- **Model turn-taking.**

As you can see from those behavioral markers, “communication support” and “communication extension” especially overlap into each other.



INFANT CLASS® TOOL

Behavioral marker: Provide words for infants' communication

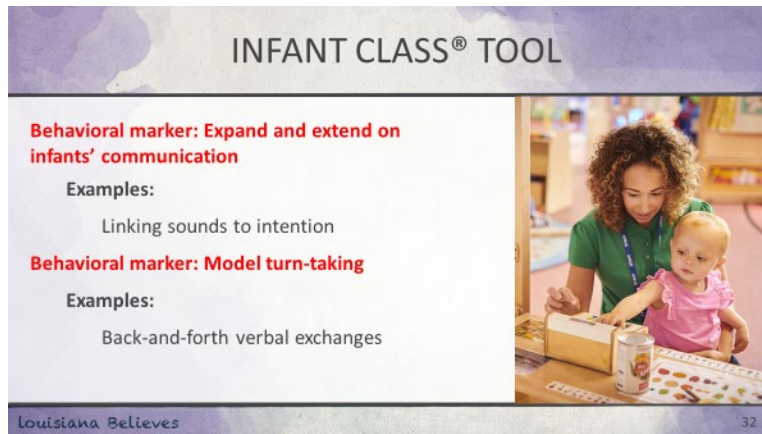
Examples:

- When an infant is making a noise when they see you warming up a bottle
- When an infant yawns after being wrapped in a blanket
- When an infant sneezes

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Here are some examples of **providing words for infants’ communication**:

- When an infant is making a noise when they see you warming up a bottle, you can acknowledge the infant’s communication by saying, “I see you are hungry; I am warming up your bottle.”
- When an infant yawns after being wrapped in a blanket, you can say, “Does your blanket make you sleepy?”
- When an infant sneezes, you can say, “Bless you! That was a big sneeze!”



The slide is titled "INFANT CLASS® TOOL". It is divided into two main sections. The first section is titled "Behavioral marker: Expand and extend on infants' communication" and lists an example: "Linking sounds to intention". The second section is titled "Behavioral marker: Model turn-taking" and lists an example: "Back-and-forth verbal exchanges". To the right of the text is a photograph of a woman with curly hair, wearing a green shirt, sitting at a table with a baby. They are playing with a wooden toy box and a small bottle. The slide also has "Louisiana Believes" in the bottom left corner and the number "32" in the bottom right corner.

Now, let's take a deeper dive into expanding and extending on infants' communication and modeling turn-taking:

"Expanding and extending on communication" is where teachers can begin to link babble or sounds like "ba ba" to words like "bottle" or "ball."

For example, when a baby says "ba ba" and is looking towards their bottle, the teacher can say, "You want your bottle; are you hungry?" or "Yes, that is your bottle!" Are you ready to drink your bottle?" thereby linking sounds to intention.

What are some other sounds or partial words that you can think of that babies typically make that you could expand or extend on, to advance their language development?

Pause for participant responses. Some examples might including the following: ma ma, da da, ball, drink, bye-bye, more, diaper.

Modeling turn-taking is when teachers engage in back-and-forth verbal exchanges with infants, using pauses and eye contact to encourage turn-taking.

A great way to model turn-taking is by using a play phone.

Hold the phone up to your ear and speak, and then hold the phone up to the baby and speak for the bay. Model a conversation with the baby, using the phone, moving it back-and-forth.

Can you think of any additional activities in which you can model turn-taking? *Pause for responses.*

Answers might include turn-taking with looking in mirrors, holding play babies, rolling balls, stacking blocks, blowing bubbles, or more, including turn-taking with making noises or sounds.

What does turn-taking help babies learn and do? *Pause for responses.*

Back-and-forth exchanges that are critical to conversational skills and future classroom learning skills. Back-and-forth exchanges teach vital social skills as well – such as pausing, showing the courtesy of giving others a chance to talk, and listening to others.

Model simpler conversations with your youngest infants. Your older infants are likely to be able to respond with sounds or talk (babble) when you put the phone up to them as well as to respond with facial and other cues to your conversation.

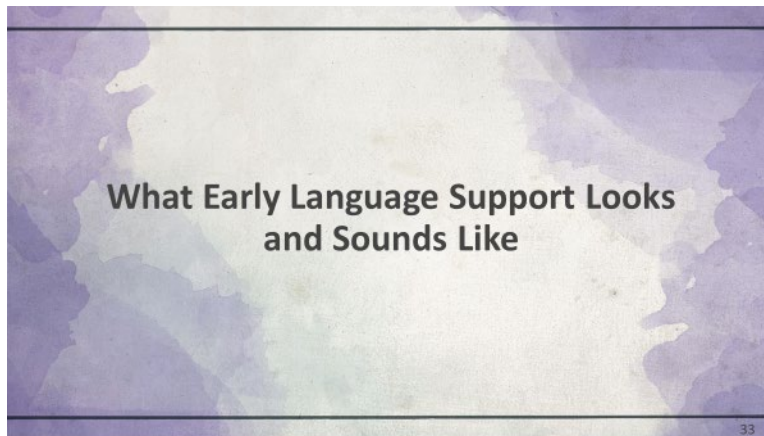
You can also use a rattle for Teacher Talk and Communication Extension.

Playing with a rattle is also a good way to model turn-taking. You can hold and shake the rattle and then give the rattle to the baby and help the baby shake the rattle, moving the rattle back-and-forth.

Pauses in shaking, when the infant and teacher listen, can not only help model conversational “turn-taking” patterns but also develop an infant’s listening skills and concentration skills.

With younger infants, you may likely have to assist with the pauses and taking turns of the rattle-shaking, whereas older infants are more likely cognitively to be able to take their turn with verbal directions.

Playing with a rattle also gives you the opportunity to “label” action, saying something like, “shake it,” thereby linking action with communication.



Let’s next take a look at some examples of opportunities for early language support and analyze them together.



Let’s take a look together at an examples of a baby’s early language efforts.

Play the video linked to the slide. (Duration: 0:59)

Video link: <https://youtu.be/kGwrzWJdRA>

Expand to full screen view so all participants can easily view the content.

Take a moment to write down what you have observed in the video. Allow 1-2 minutes for participants to write down their observations.

Tell me some examples of what early language efforts you see from the baby. Answers may include the infant babbling, saying “na” and “da” sounds, looking at the camera and smiling and pausing. Point out examples that the participants don’t mention.

Is the caregiver providing Early Language Support?

Listen to participants’ answers. If they say “yes,” ask them what they see that you have been learning about. If participants do not make mention of it, note that the infant looks like she is waiting for someone to talk back to her, but no one responds, repeats, or encourages talking.

What could have been done differently by the caregiver, to encourage Early Language Support?

Allow participants 3-5 minutes to share answers, add in additional answers, depending on what the participants suggest.

For example, the teacher/caregiver could:

- Repeat back, when the infant pauses, the sounds that the infant is saying – “na” and “ba,” “na na na,” “ba ba ba”
- Expand on “na” and “ba” by saying, “Oh, are you saying ‘bottle,’ do you want your bottle?”
- Encourage the infant to make additional and different sounds – for example, “ma,” “da” – “Can you say mama, or dada?”
- Start to have a back-and-forth conversation with the infant. When the infant is pausing and smiling at the camera it would be a perfect opportunity for the teacher/caregiver to have that back-and-forth conversation with her.
 - For example, “Oh, are you saying ‘ba-ba’ because you are ready to eat, are you hungry?”
 - Then the caregiver could pause, and after the infant responds the caregiver could speak again, saying “Yes, I know you are hungry; I have you in your highchair.”
 - Then the caregiver could pause, and after the infant responds the caregiver could speak again, saying, “I am fixing your lunch.”
- Practice self-talk, talking to the infant about what the teacher/caregiver is doing, to keep the infant engaged and keeps “conversation” ongoing between the two.



That last video was an example of a *low* level of Early Language Support from the caregiver.

We want to provide a *high* level of Early Language Support to the infants in our care. Let's take a look at another example of a caregiver with an infant and assess whether that is a higher level of Early Language Support.

Play the video linked to the slide. (Duration: 3:12)

Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZcIOL7vIQQ>

Expand to full screen view so all participants can easily view the content.

Take a moment to write down what you have observed in the video. Allow 1-2 minutes for participants to write down their observations.

Does this caregiver provide Early Language Support?

Listen to participants' answers and ask them to explain how what they saw links back to what they have been learning about in this training.

Answers might include the following. Add in additional answers, depending on what participants suggest.

- *Examples of Teacher Talk are seen when the mom provides language to the infant when the infant is smiling, by saying, "Hi, Smiley!" and "Where's my happy baby?"*
 - *The caregiver is verbally describing the infant's actions and using complete and varied sentences. Teacher talk is again seen when the baby seems to cough, and the mom responds back with "uh-oh."*
- *The caregiver also imitates and repeats sounds expressed by the infant, such as when the baby says, "ah-yeah" and the caregiver repeats back that sound.*
- *We also see communication extension in this video, specifically in the behavior indicators of the caregiver providing words for the infant's communication and expanding/extending on the infant's communication.*
 - *We see this, for example, when the caregiver sees the infant smiling and responds by saying, "Hi, smiley" and "Where's my happy baby?"*
 - *Several times the caregiver also follows the infant's gaze and asks, "What is it?"*
 - *Again, towards the end of the video clip the baby is making a scowl, and the caregiver again asks, "What is it?"*

- Remember that especially in non-verbal infants, facial expressions are a primary form of communication
- Model turn-taking is seen throughout this video.
 - Each time the baby makes a sound the caregiver responds.
 - Moreover, frequently the caregiver says something and pauses, waiting for the infant to respond either verbally or by expression.



Let's take a look at another example of a caregiver with an infant and assess the level of Early Language Support.

Play the video linked to the slide. (Duration: 1:40)

Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQK15XISUvg>

Expand to full screen view so all participants can easily view the content.

Take a moment to write down what you have observed in the video. Allow 1-2 minutes for participants to write down their observations.

This video is a great example of what it pertains to Early Language Support? Listen to participants' answers and ask them to explain how what they saw links back to what they have been learning about in this training.

Answers might include the following. Add in additional answers, depending on what the participants suggest.

- *Teacher Talk: The caregiver engages in self-talk, verbally labeling whose turn and using complete and varied sentences.*
- *Communication Support: The caregiver initiates sounds, imitates and repeats sounds, and encourages talking.*
- *This clip especially Communication Extension: The caregiver models turn-taking as the mom keeps going back-and-forth saying and pointing, "mommy's turn," and "your turn," as they each take turns blowing raspberries.*
 - Remember at this stage it is natural for a baby to blow raspberries as they are developing muscles in their mouths that they will need for future language development. It is not spitting, it is actually an important, needed step to future language development.


Materials That Support Early Language Development

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Let's talk next about the kinds of materials that you can use in your infant classroom to support the infants' early language development!

MATERIALS TO SUPPORT EARLY LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- Mirrors
- Balls
- Play phones
- Bubbles
- Puppets
- Soft blocks
- Rattles
- Books
- Music
- Pictures



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The good news is that there are SO many **materials to support early language development**.

These include **mirrors, balls, play phones, bubbles, puppets, soft blocks, rattles, books, music, and pictures**.

Let's look at how you can use each type of material to support specific learning concepts.

EXAMPLES OF MATERIALS: MIRRORS

- **Communication Support** – initiate sounds and demonstrate sound formation with mirrors
- **Teacher Talk** – map words to actions, label objects, and use descriptive and specific words – use this chance to help develop infants' vocabulary!
- **Communication Extension** – provide words for infants' communication, expand and extend on infants' communication, and model turn-taking



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Let's start with mirrors – mirrors are a great way to help infants learn!

How many of you have mirrors in your classroom? *Pause to allow participants to respond.*

How do you engage with those mirrors, and facilitate the children in your care engaging with those mirrors? *Pause to allow participants to respond.*

You can support **Communication Support by initiating sounds and demonstrating sound formation with mirrors.** *Model with a mirror to demonstrate how to show infants mouth shape or formation.*

For younger infants – make simpler sounds, such as “oooo,” and “bbbbbb.”

Older infants can make more complex sounds like tongue clicking or clacking and the sound of a motor of a vehicle. *Model the sound and model how a teacher would do this with a mirror with an infant.*

By doing this initiation of sounds with your infants, simple sounds can develop into words as a child progresses to the next stage. For example, bbb can turn into baby, bbb...bottle, bbb...ball, ddd...daddy, mmm...mama.

What else can you do or have seen done, to make sounds or initiate and sound out simple words? *Allow 2-3 minutes for group discussion.*

You can also support **Teacher Talk by mapping words to actions, labeling objects, and using descriptive and specific words.**

For example, talk about things that the infant sees when she or he looks in the mirror. Ex. “That is your face!” “How many ears do you see? You have two ears, and your ears help you to hear, like you hear me talk to you now.” “What else do we see in this mirror?”

You can support **Communication Extension by providing words for infants' communication, expanding and extending on infants' communication, and modeling turn-taking.**

For example, you can model turn-taking by asking, “what do you see?” pausing, and then saying, “That’s right, you see a baby! Who is that baby?” pausing, and then saying, “that’s you!” You can provide words for infants' communication if an

infant answers, “b, b, b...,” by responding, “that’s a baby!” You can expand and extend on infants’ communication by adding words to actions and sounds, such as adding, “that baby is smiling and talking!”

Mirrors also provide a great way to help infants explore.

As previously mentioned, the domain of Early Language Support frequently overlaps with the other Infant CLASS® domains. For example, you can provide what Infant CLASS® calls “Facilitated Exploration” with mirror play. The infant may even reach out to touch the “baby” in the mirror, and over time infants will learn that they are seeing their own face and start to recognize their reflection.



Did you realize that **bubbles** are a great way to support early language development?

- Playing with bubbles provides an opportunity for **labeling**, such as saying, “Oh, look at the bubbles!”
- Play with bubbles also provides an opportunity to **describe events**, such as saying “Pop!”
- You can **initiate sounds or words** and help children initiate or repeats sounds, by saying, “p, p, p...pop” or “b, b, b...bubbles.”
- You can **extend communication** by asking questions such as, “Where did it go? Did it pop?”




Play with **puppets** or **baby dolls** helps you model turn-taking, especially, as you take turns talking with the puppet or having the puppet talk to the infant. You can even use the puppets or doll to read or sing a song and to practice the words in the story or song.

EXAMPLES OF MATERIALS: SOFT BLOCKS

Soft blocks feature assorted colors, shapes, textures, and images – so with them you can support:

- Communication Support – initiate sounds or words
- Teacher Talk – describe classroom events and label objects
- Communication Extension – provide words, extend communication, and model turn-taking



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Let's talk next about **soft blocks**.

Soft blocks feature many assorted colors, shapes, textures, and images.

So, soft blocks, particularly those with pictures or textures on them, allow you opportunities for **Teacher Talk** by **describing classroom events**. For example, you might support Early Language Development with soft block play by saying "oh, you're stacking them," or "oh, they fell down." Soft block that have pictures on them also provide you an opportunity to **label objects** as the infant looks at or handles the block. For example, you can label the image on the block, "look at the cow," or "that's a number, that's the number one," or "this block is blue, like your shirt."

Soft blocks also provide opportunities for **Communication Support** because you can **initiate sounds or words**.

What sounds might you initiate with soft blocks like those pictured here? *Pause for responses, which may include: "b, b, b...block" and numbers or images on the blocks.*

Soft blocks also provide opportunities for **Communication Extension** because you can **provide words** for infants' communication, expand and **extend communication**, and **model turn-taking**.

How might you add words to an infants' actions or sounds with a soft block? *Pause for responses, which may include: "Do you like the dog? I see you pointing at it!" or, when hearing an infant say "d, d, da," replying "dog" and pointing at the picture.*


How might you model turn-taking with soft blocks? *Pause for responses, which may include: Taking turns pointing at blocks, grabbing or stacking blocks, or taking turns saying what is on the blocks.*

EXAMPLES OF MATERIALS: BOOKS

Hearing words helps to build a rich network of words in an infant's brain.

Use books for:

- Verbally labeling objects
- Initiating or imitating sounds and words
- Extending communication
- Using complete and varied sentences
- Modeling turn-taking



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Of course, **books** are a strong source of Early Language Support!

- You can **verbally label objects** as you refer to pictures, and books with textures or things to touch also allow you to “describe classroom events” or “self-talk” as you model touching the book.
- Reading a book allows you the opportunity to **use complete and varied sentences** with infants.
- You can **initiate sounds or words** for the pictures in the book, or the texture of the book, you are reading together; books also provide you the opportunity to **imitate** or repeat the sounds the infant may make while looking at or touching the book with you.
- And, of course, you can engage in **back-and-forth verbal exchanges** with infants as you read together, as you ask the infant questions about the story and about how it connects to their lives, using pauses and eye contact to encourage turn-taking.

Perhaps the most important reason to read aloud and gesture with books is that it makes a connection between the things an infant loves most – your voice and closeness to you – and books. Enjoying time spent with books can lay a strong foundation for later print literacy.

EXAMPLES OF MATERIALS: MUSIC







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Music is beneficial for learning in many ways. For example, playing music to an infant can activate the neural pathways responsible for many types of skill development.

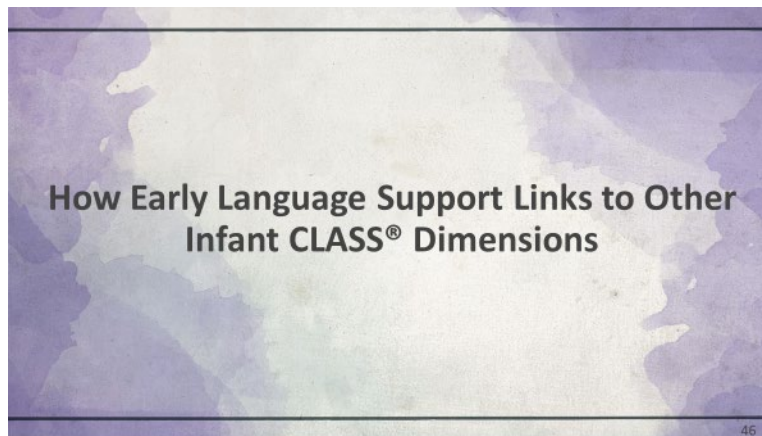
Even as young as three months old, we begin using music to help us remember things we have learned.

That also makes musical instruments and other forms of music a great medium to use to support early language development. For example, when singing with children, you can encourage them to make sounds in the song, such as the animal sounds in “Old McDonald” or the sounds in “Baby Shark.”



Pictures of infants’ families, especially gives you the opportunity to label their mom, nana, sister, etc., as well as to identify the infants themselves by their own names.

Place pictures along the bottom of classroom walls or on the floor, in real-life picture books or in picture cubes.



As we mentioned earlier in this training session, effective Early Language Support will also support your success in the other three dimensions of the Infant CLASS® tool.

Those dimensions are called:


- Relational Climate,
- Teacher Sensitivity, and
- Facilitated Exploration.

INFANT CLASS® TOOL

Dimension: Relational Climate

Indicators:

- Relational Behaviors
- Emotion Expression
- Respect for Infants' State
- Lack of Adult Negativity



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Let's take a look at the **Relational Climate** dimension of the Infant CLASS® tool.

Relational Climate is comprised of four behavioral markers:

- **Relational behaviors**, which means proximity (or physical closeness), eye contact, (and being on the same eye level), joint (or sharing) attention, and providing affection and contact
- **Emotion expression**, which means frequent smiling, laughing, and enthusiasm by both the teacher and returned by the infant
- **Respect for infants' state**, which means using a calm voice, gentle approach (and touch when moving or holding infants), consistent communication of intentions, transitions or changes, and respectful language (including referring to infants using their names)
- **Lack of adult negativity**, which means lack of irritation or frustration, lack of verbal harshness, lack of rough handling, and lack of negative comments

How does "respect for infants' state" connect with what we learned earlier about Early Language Support? *Pause for responses.*


When demonstrating "respect for infants' state," you communicate your intentions, transitions, and changes...which is also an example of what we have learned is "self-talk."

INFANT CLASS® TOOL

Dimension: Teacher Sensitivity

Indicators:

- Awareness and Cue Detection
- Responsive
- Infant Comfort



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Next, let's take a look at the **Teacher Sensitivity** dimension of the Infant CLASS® tool.

Teacher Sensitivity is comprised of three behavioral markers:

- **Awareness and cue detection**, which means that the teacher regularly visually scans the rooms, attends to children physically by consistently physically orienting toward the majority of the infants, and consistently verbally and/or physically acknowledges the infants whether or not they are making bids for attention, by talking to them or giving them a nod or smile
- **Responsiveness**, which means the teacher consistently responds to the verbal and physical cues of infants to meet those infants' emotions and needs and that teachers adjust actions and responses to meet the individual needs of infants
- **Infant comfort**, which means that infants appear to be content in the classroom and comfortable with the teachers, that infants seek out the teacher and look to the teacher to acknowledge them when they do something new, and that infants look for teachers when they are upset and are calmed by the teacher's presence or soothing efforts

How does what we have learned about self-talk and describing classroom events connect with Teacher Sensitivity?
Pause for responses.

When you are aware of and describe the cues you detect and your responses to those cues – those descriptions are self-talk and description of classroom events – then you are also demonstrating Teacher Sensitivity, through “awareness and cue detection” and “responsiveness.”



- Irritation
- Frustration
- Verbal harshness
- Negative comments
 - “Spoiled”
 - “Crybaby”
 - “You’ve been held too much”
 - “Quit blowing bubbles/spitting”

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We've talked a lot today about what we *do* want to hear in an infant classroom, but just as important is **what we don't ever want to hear in an infant classroom**, so let's dig a little deeper into this topic.

What might **irritation**, **frustration**, and **verbal harshness** sound like in an infant classroom? *Pause for responses and discuss appropriate caregiver responses in those situations.*

Let's also talk about **negative comments**. For example, sometimes infant caregivers may tell an infant that he or she is “**spoiled**,” a “**crybaby**,” or “**has been held too much**,” or “**to quit blowing bubbles**” or “**stop spitting**.”

Why don't we want to hear that? What do these things sound like? *Pause for responses.*

Sometimes adults demonstrate negativity without even realizing it, because we may not understand what is actually developmentally-appropriate for an infant.

When an adult caregiver tells an infant that he or she is “spoiled” or a “crybaby” or “has been held too much,” what do you think the infant has done that probably led to those adult comments? *Pause for responses.*

What have we learned today about how infants communicate and what they need – why are these not developmentally-appropriate comments to make to an infant? Why don’t we ever want to hear these in an infant classroom?

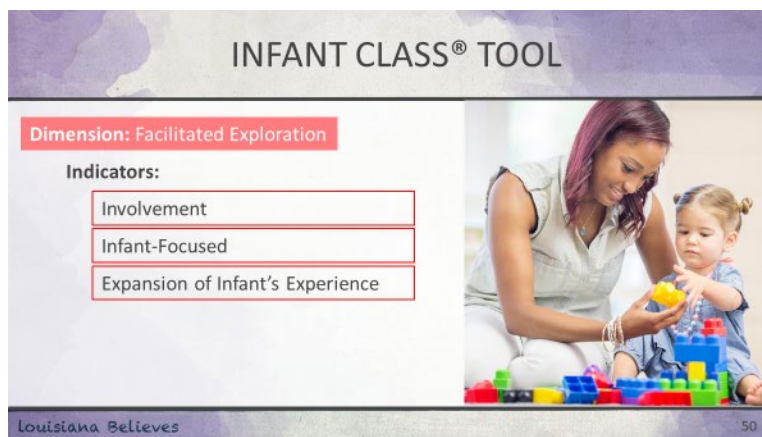
Pause for responses, and link back to the relevant points of Relational Climate and Teacher Sensitivity. Also remind participants about key infant development principles of attachment.

Babies communicate through their cries, coos, facial expressions, and body language long before they say their first words. When they cry or “fuss,” they are not trying to be irritating or frustrating, and they are not spoiled – they are just trying to communicate in the only way developmentally available to them at this time!

When an adult caregiver tells an infant to “quit blowing bubbles” or “stop spitting,” how does such a comment actually *stop* early language development? What have we learned about an infant’s first attempts to communicate – why does an infant blow bubbles with his or her mouth or sometimes seem to be spitting or drooling?

Pause for responses, and link back to infants’ attempts to initiate and imitate sounds and how they have to learn how to do that.

Blowing bubbles or spitting or drooling are natural consequences of early language attempts.



Finally, let’s take a look at the **Facilitated Exploration** dimension of the Infant CLASS® tool.

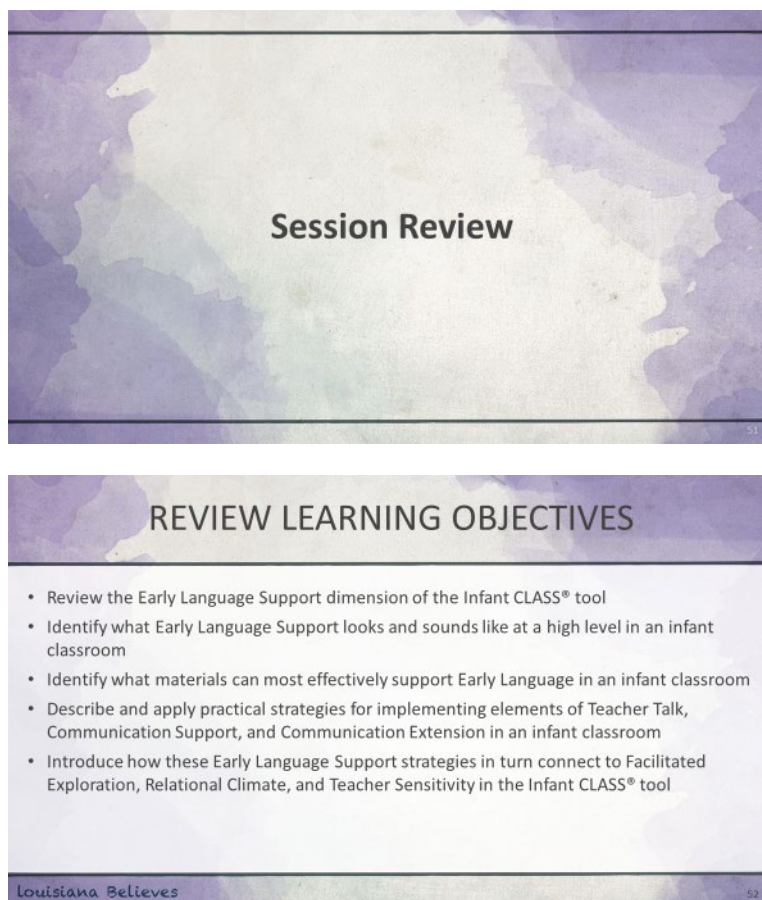
Facilitated Exploration is comprised of three behavioral markers:

- **Involvement**, which means the teacher spends most of her time actively involved with the infants, consistently initiating, joining, or mirroring interactions and behavior with infants during play and within routines.
- **Infant focused**, which means the teacher consistently watches the infants to see what they are interested in and then follows the infants’ leads, in the teachers’ comments and/or in the activities the teacher selects, that the teacher allows the infants choice about activities, and that the teacher provides opportunities for the infants safely to explore options in their surroundings.

- **Expansion of infants' experience**, which means the teacher regularly encourages the infants to persist in experiences through verbal and non-verbal encouragement and enthusiasm and that the teacher often adjusts the infants' experience to support continued involvement or extend development – so, for example, the infant does not continue to play with the same materials in the same way.

How does what we have learned about describing classroom events connect with Facilitated Exploration? *Pause for responses.*

When you describe classroom events you are also demonstrating Facilitated Exploration, through “joining in experiences” and “expansion of infants' experience” with further descriptions.



Session Review

REVIEW LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Review the Early Language Support dimension of the Infant CLASS® tool
- Identify what Early Language Support looks and sounds like at a high level in an infant classroom
- Identify what materials can most effectively support Early Language in an infant classroom
- Describe and apply practical strategies for implementing elements of Teacher Talk, Communication Support, and Communication Extension in an infant classroom
- Introduce how these Early Language Support strategies in turn connect to Facilitated Exploration, Relational Climate, and Teacher Sensitivity in the Infant CLASS® tool

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Explain that for each statement, they will show a “thumbs up” if they think we covered the objective, a “thumbs down” if we did not cover the objective, and a “sideways thumb” if we partially covered the objective.

Read the learning objectives on the screen.

- **Review the Early Language Support dimension of the Infant CLASS® tool**
- **Identify what Early Language Support looks and sounds like at a high level in an infant classroom**
- **Identify what materials can most effectively support Early Language in an infant classroom**
- **Describe and apply practical strategies for implementing elements of Teacher Talk, Communication Support, and Communication Extension in an infant classroom**

- Introduce how these Early Language Support strategies in turn connect to Facilitated Exploration, Relational Climate, and Teacher Sensitivity in the Infant CLASS® tool



At this time, ask 3-5 participants to share the most important thing they learned from the training and how it will help them to better support the early language development of the children in their case, by also sharing one thing that they will change about the care they provide, based on this training.

Have all participants write down what they learned on the 3-2-1 Action Plan handout.

Open the floor for participants' comments and questions.



That brings us to the end of our time. Thank you so much for your attention and hard work today. Before you go, please complete the Post-Assessment Evaluation.

Distribute the Post-Assessment Evaluation.

When you have completed the evaluation, please fold it and leave it in the center of your table before you leave. I hope this has been valuable! If you have any additional questions, I will be available to talk further.

Thank you.

Post-Assessment Evaluation Guidance

- *Review the forms to identify the group's responses*
- *Compare the results and identify the areas in which participants expressed greatest growth and the areas in which participants might still need support*
- *Share results with Louisiana DOE representative to inform local continuing professional development efforts*