Principle 2
EQUIPMENT and MATERIALS

• Computer with PowerPoint (PPT) or Overhead projector and screen

• Transparencies L2-1 to L2-17 or Language PPT
  Optional: blank transparencies and pens

• Handouts L-4 to L-12

• VHS video player and TV/monitor for Videos: Talking and Playing: Language is the Key; ECR 3-5 Language: Peer Partner Discussion

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Symbols shown above will appear in the left column of the Trainer’s Script when an indicated item should be used.

Trainer Actions also appear in the left column.

Text in the right column of the Trainer’s Script provides the content to share with participants.

TRAINER NOTES

Training Time Total: 4 hours and 30 minutes (approximate)
  • Principle 1: approximately 45 minutes
  • Principle 2: approximately 3 hours
  • Principle 3: approximately 45 minutes

Role-Play Partner

Make two copies of the Role-Play script in Handout L-5. Ask a co-trainer or participant to do the role-play with you before the training session begins.

Daily Routines / Planned Experiences Chart

Bring the newsprint chart of responses from the Language Module Principle 1 activity: Daily Routines / Planned Experiences.

Post the chart so you can refer to it during today’s training.

VHS videos

Two video segments are available to assist with this principle.
  • One video segment (Talking and Play: Language is the Key) provides examples of adults commenting, asking questions, and responding to children during play. (See Supplemental Trainer Materials.)
  • Another video segment (ECR 3-5 Language: Peer Partner Discussion) is available to use when discussing the Peer Partner Model.

Supplemental Trainer Materials

The Language Module Checklist for participants completing homework assignments is found is the Supplemental Trainer Materials.
During Principle 1, we discussed experiences for children to assist with the development of background knowledge and language skills.

This leads us to Principle 2: Children need frequent opportunities to talk about their experiences and ideas using words, phrases, and sentences.
At the end of this principle, it is expected that:

You will support children’s efforts to communicate by providing them frequent opportunities to talk.

You will engage children in conversation by:
- **Commenting** or making statements during daily routines, play, and planned activities.
- **Asking** meaningful questions.
- **Responding** and adding new information to children’s comments or questions.

The Iowa Early Learning Standard for Communication, Language, and Literacy is:
- Children understand and use communication and language for a variety of purposes.

The benchmarks for this principle include:
- Children will initiate, listen, and respond appropriately in conversations with peers and adults.
- Children will ask and answer a variety of question types.
- Children will speak in sentences of increasing length and grammatical complexity.

...continued...
Adults need to provide frequent opportunities for conversation to support children’s efforts to communicate. Providing children frequent opportunities to talk is a simple process. We are going to demonstrate this principle by doing a role-play activity. During this first scenario, notice how often the child engages in conversation with the adult.

With a co-trainer or participant, role-play first script in Handout L-5: *Role-Play: Using Commenting, Asking Questions, and Responding Strategies, Part 1*

Do not provide participants with handout until AFTER both parts of role-play are complete.

Encourage ‘child’ player to exaggerate lack of interest in conversation during Part 1.

Take 3 to 4 minutes to role-play Part 1.

How engaged was the child in conversation? How much did the child talk?
Now watch as we act out this next scenario. Listen for comments I make, questions I ask, and words I use to respond to the child in conversation.

How engaged in conversation was this child?

What comments did the adult make?

What questions were asked to engage the child in conversation?

How did the adult respond to what the child said during the conversation?

What happened when the adult paused in the conversation?

How do you know the adult talked at the child’s level of understanding?
This is a copy of the suggested dialogue for both participants in role-play. You may refer to it later. The point of the role-play was to demonstrate how to take an everyday play experience and use it to provide children with an opportunity to talk.

How do you get children to talk about their experiences and ideas?

To encourage children to talk about things they have done and places they have gone, it is helpful if the adult remembers three strategies:

- match children’s level of understanding,
- give children time to talk, and
- engage children in conversation.

First, as you talk with children, be sure to use sentences that match a child’s level of understanding.

Adults assist children in learning language skills by listening to children and responding appropriately. An appropriate response occurs when the adult matches the child’s level of understanding and slightly adds to the child’s words.

...continued...
Here’s an example:

If a three-year-old says, “ Teacher, a truck!” , the adult can help the child increase his/her language skills by expanding from a two-word sentence to a three- to five-word sentence.

The adult might say, “ That was a big noisy truck.”

The adult wouldn’t say, “ That was a big, two-ton, gravel truck leaving the construction site and heading south toward the highway.”

How would you add information to the child’s sentence, “ Teacher, a truck!”

This transparency gives you a rough idea of how you can match and add to the child’s level of understanding. Matching allows the child to move from his or her current level of proficiency to a more advanced one.

It is important to note that the numbers shown here are NOT absolute standards. You don’t have to use two or three more words in your sentences every time you respond to a child.

The point to remember is that you should try to increase the total number of words just slightly to add to the child’s understanding of the concept or situation you are talking about.
The second strategy to encourage children to talk is: *Adults must provide children time to talk.*

Adults are tempted to dominate a conversation with a child since children’s responses are often slow and incomplete. But remember, the goal is to get the child to talk about his or her experiences. The adult’s part of the conversation can be very useful in modeling how and what to say. Be sure to give a child thinking time and ample talking time to say as much as he or she can.

Pooh Bear (Winnie the Pooh character) says, “Think! Think! Think!” Our children need time to “Think, Think, Think,” too!

As a general rule, the adult should pause at least five seconds for a child to respond.

How long is five seconds? Longer than you think. Let me demonstrate how long five seconds lasts.

Children need this much time because children need both *time to think* and *time to talk.*

...continued...
Do you have any suggestions for reminding yourself to pause for the child’s response?

We have discussed two ways to get children to talk:
- Match their level of understanding
- Give them time to talk

A third way adults encourage children to talk about their experiences and ideas is by engaging them in conversation.

Engaging children in conversation is when you invite them to talk.

Listening to children gives you information about how much a child knows and how well his or her language skills are developing.
To engage children in conversation, you may use three different strategies:

First, you may make comments or statements during daily routines, play, and planned activities;

Second, you may ask a question; or

Third, you may respond, expanding and adding new information to the child’s comments or questions.

You can remember this best by thinking about the word CAR: C for Comment, A for Ask, and R for Respond. We will look closely at each of these strategies to engage children in conversation.

To help understand what we have covered so far, we are going to watch a video called Talking and Playing: Language is the Key. In the video, Linda Kennedy discusses the strategies we have been talking about:

- Matching children’s level of understanding during conversation
- Giving children time to think and talk
- How to engage children in conversation using comments, questions, and responses

...continued...
Ms. Kennedy refers to you, the audience, as parents. These strategies are great for parents and for primary caregivers. They are just as applicable to all other teachers and care providers for young children.

As you watch, pay attention to how the adults engage children in conversation by using comments, asking questions, and responding to add new information to children’s comments and questions.

What were some of the experiences or activities the children and adults in the video were involved in? What were they playing with?

Examples might include cooking and dress-up in the housekeeping area, playing with trucks, playing with a doctor kit, or playing with Frosty.

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Each scene showed children actively engaged in play of their own choice. The adults used the interests of the children to guide the conversation. The adults also matched the level of each child’s understanding.

One mom, Theresa, expanded her son Jerrel’s language about the dump truck by giving him the words “big” and “yellow” to describe it. This seemed appropriate for him.

Yet Samia was perfectly ready for the question, “What’s in the soup?” She provided a whole list of ingredients.

In the video, there were many examples of the adults allowing time for children to think and talk. These were often pointed out by Ms. Kennedy. Do you remember some of them? What were they?

The children in the video were engaged in conversation with the adults. Some children had more language skills than others. Let’s talk for a bit about how the adults used comments to engage the children in conversation.

When Theresa gave a description to Jerrel of the “big yellow truck,” she was simply describing something that he was playing with.

Remember when Linda described for Samia what she was doing during the dress-up scene? She said, “Samia is wearing a beautiful hat. You are putting a scarf on with it.” Linda was commenting on something Samia was doing.

...continued...
Another example of a comment was Lauren’s father, Mark, saying, “Oh, doctor, I have a toothache.” He matched Lauren’s play by describing the event and became actively involved in her pretend play. These are three examples from the video of types of comments adults can use. Did these comments sound familiar? How were they similar to what you do?

In making a comment or statement, the adult is like a narrator talking aloud, sharing observations of people, places, things, and events about the child’s world.

These comments are natural conversation-starters. They may seem like obvious statements, but they are a way to meaningfully engage children in conversation.

Remember Emily and the firefighter hat from the role-play? The first comment I made was, “That’s a great hat!” It got Emily’s attention and motivated her to interact.
Please take a few minutes to read this.

Questions?

The second strategy for engaging children in conversation is to ask questions.

Think back to the video. Sometimes the questions prompted a one-word response. When Leslie asked Will, “Where’s the train going?” Will answered, “Downtown.” At other times, the child gave a whole string of responses. For example, when Linda asked Samia, “What’s in the soup?,” Samia gave quite an extensive answer.
There are three basic types of questions:
Yes/no questions, ‘wh--’ questions (who, what, or when), and open-ended questions.
Open-ended questions often start with “why” or “how.”
Open-ended questions also allow more than one answer.
What kind of questions (yes/no, ‘wh--,’ open-ended) did the adults use?
Which types of questions prompted the longest responses from the children?

Yes/no are the easiest questions to answer and do not require a lot of thought. But adults don’t gather much information from the child’s answer.
‘Wh--’ questions begin with who, what, where or when. When a child answers these questions, it gives the adult more information and some idea of how much the child understands.

...continued...
In the video, Kathy referred to the tail of the pull-toy and asked Ben, “What is that part?” Ben responded, “The tail.” This is an example of a ‘wh-’ question that leads to the child putting a label on object. Often, ‘wh--’ questions lead to short answers.

This handout gives a general idea of when children are developmentally able to answer questions. Notice that ‘what’ questions like “What is this?” are the easiest, and ‘why,’ ‘how,’ and ‘what would happen if…’ questions are the most difficult. These last types of questions are open-ended. Open-ended questions can be answered in more than one way. They usually begin with ‘why,’ ‘how,’ or ‘what will happen if…’

Here is a handout of suggestions for open-ended questions. Copy this page onto card stock, cut out each question, place them on a ring, and keep them handy as reminders to use when you talk with children. Answers to these questions require a lot of thought from a child and provide adults with a clear idea of how the child is thinking about the subject of the question.

...continued...
The most important point is to ask natural questions that encourage children to think about the experience they are having.

A child who understands and is able to answer open-ended questions will not be challenged by yes/no and simple ‘wh’ questions, which often begin to sound like test questions and do not increase language skills when the child obviously knows the answers.

Be careful not to bombard young children with a lot of questions. Ask one question, pause for 5 seconds, and give children a chance to reply.

Please take a few minutes to read this handout.

Questions about ‘questions’?
We talked about comments and questions as strategies to use to engage children in conversation. The *third strategy* to engage children in conversation is *responding*. The adult responds to whatever the child says, adds new information, and extends the conversation.

In the video, Ben was playing with a circular rubber toy and said, “A ring.” Kathy responded with, “A big pink ring.” Kathy added two words that described the ring. She added just enough to match Ben’s level of understanding.

While cooking soup, Samia said, “This is for you, and don’t eat it.” Her mom responded, “You want me to wait.” Linda responded by changing what Samia said, which gave Samia another way to say the same thing.

Can you remember other examples of comments that were expanded?

...*continued...*
How were questions expanded?
What new information did the adults provide to the children?
What new information did the adults provide to the children?

The main reason for expanding is to keep the conversation going and give the child more opportunities to talk.
You may provide more information or facts, matching a child’s understanding and adding just a little more background knowledge, to encourage the child’s development and use of language.
We discussed the three C – A – R strategies: Comment, Ask questions, and Respond to children’s comment and questions. During your day, when can you use these strategies?
In the video, you saw parents playing with children and using a variety of materials. It is important for you to understand that talking with children happens during play. It can happen throughout the rest of the day as well. Daily routines provide many opportunities to talk with children.
In addition, planned experiences provide excellent opportunities for language development. Some experiences can be thoughtfully planned to achieve specific outcomes.
Whether language occurs as part of a daily routine or a planned experience, there are opportunities to incorporate language before, during, or after the routine, event, or activity.
Talking with children *before* a routine, event, or activity is quite important. It lets children know what’s going to happen. It stimulates their thinking about the experience and triggers background knowledge that might help them understand the experience.

Talking *during* the activity expands children’s vocabulary and organizes their background knowledge.

Talking *after* an activity is completed allows the adult to help children understand the activity by discussing it. You can discover what children know and don’t know about the activity, and you can help them better understand as necessary.

Please take a few minutes to look over the examples on this handout.

Any questions or comments?
We are going to spend the next hour or so developing a language plan for you to use with children. We will walk you through each step of the plan, practice the plan with your peer partners, and help you get ready to take the plan back to your setting to use with children.

Planning and preparing helps you to focus on the important information, vocabulary, and concepts you want the children to understand. Planning and preparing what you will say to children is called direct teaching.

Most of the comments and questions you will use during the experience you plan today will be guided by the child. It is not possible to plan exactly what you will say or do within the experience because you don’t know how the child will respond. You must be prepared for teachable moments, those opportunities that present themselves when we listen and watch what children say and do. This is called indirect teaching.

It is, however, possible to plan the experiences and make some predictions about what might happen and what conversations might occur.
Use this form to plan your lesson for engaging children in conversations with the C-A-R strategies. In a few minutes, I will give you time to plan your lesson with your partner. First, read through the example.

Questions about the example?

Think of an activity or experience that you would like to do with your children. For this assignment, we will use a planned experience. Please do not select reading a book as your activity or experience. In the Reading Module, we will do a lot with books.

Think about all the experiences and activities we brainstormed previously. You may want to choose one of those. I suggest that you select an activity that is simple and easy. Stay away from complex activities. You want to concentrate on using the strategies, not on setting up a complicated activity. The example activity is *Making Playdough*. Write your activity title on your plan.

...continued...
Next, decide what new information, ideas, or concepts you want to present to the children during the activity or experience. What do you want the children to learn or experience from participating in this activity? What do you want the children to take away from the experience or lesson? What understandings do you want to build? Write that in Question 2.

Using the playdough example, you will see possible concepts for the children to learn:
- A recipe is used to know what to put in the playdough.
- When water gets really hot, it turns to steam.
- Mixing the colors red and yellow together makes the color orange.

Take a few minutes to complete Question 2 now.
Now, make a list of 7 to 8 words you might say or use while doing this activity or experience with children. Write these in the next box. Here are the words from the playdough example:

- recipe
- measure
- stir
- mix
- boil
- steam
- empty
- full
- knead

These might be new words for many of your children.

Next, we will plan comments and strategies you might use before the activity begins, during the activity, and after it is over.

During this planning time, I will stop you and ask you to role-play with your partner what you have written. You will role-play only with your partner and not in front of the whole group.

Before you plan your activity, we are going to talk about the peer partner model. You learned about peer partnering during our first class.

Now, we are going to learn more about this model and use it as you plan your activity. The peer partner model will help you share your learning with a peer as you learn and apply these strategies.
Let’s watch a video of two providers planning a lesson.

Work with your peer partner. Tell your partner about your experience, the thing(s) you want the children to learn from the experience, and the words you might use during the experience. Ask your partner for additional suggestions and ideas. Take about 10 minutes to have that conversation now with your peer partner. Each of you has 5 minutes. Please do only Step 1.

...continued...
Next, work together to come up with some comments and questions you will use when you introduce this activity to children. What would you say to children about the activity before it occurs?

Look back at the playdough example if you need some ideas. You can also refer to Handouts L-7 through L-10. Remember to use some open-ended questions.

Take about 10 minutes to write the comments and questions you will use before the activity. Work together to do one partner’s plan first, then do the other partner’s. Keep in mind what you want the children to learn from the lesson, including the words you want to introduce.

Think about the children and their current level of understanding. Also think about what kind of responses your children might give to your comments or questions. Thinking about the responses may give you ideas about other comments and questions you could use before the activity. This is the strategy known as respond and add a little more.

...continued...
Write the following on a transparency:

Our playdough is dry.
It’s icky.
I want to play with playdough.
Let’s make new playdough.

If I said to children, “Our old playdough is dry,” they might have one or more of the following responses:
- “It’s icky.”
- “I want to play with playdough.”
- “Let’s make new playdough.”

Each of these comments or questions can be responded to and will keep the conversation going.

It is difficult to plan for the respond and add a little more strategy because you don’t know what children will actually say.

How would you respond and add to these comments?

Record your responses so you can use them for the next activity.

After 10 minutes, call group together
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONS / MATERIALS</th>
<th>TRAINER’S SCRIPT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time to role-play what you have written! One of you will be the adult and make a comment or ask a question you have written on your handout. The partner will be the child. The child will respond to what the adult says. The child’s response could be a gesture, comment, or question. The child may just sit there. If that is the case, the adult pauses for a few seconds and continues with another comment or question.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After the child’s response, the adult will respond appropriately to the child’s comments or questions. You may not have a chance to use all your written comments and questions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>After a few minutes, switch roles. The second partner should then be the adult.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Remember, these conversations would occur during an introduction, before an activity actually occurs. You will have about six minutes to practice your comments and questions. Refer to the transparency for directions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Any questions?</td>
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</tbody>
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After 3 minutes, remind participants to switch roles
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONS / MATERIALS</th>
<th>TRAINER’S SCRIPT</th>
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What did you learn from your role-play? How did your comments and questions engage the child in conversation? Did you find opportunities to respond to comments by the child? What other comments or questions could you add? Take a couple of minutes to write any new comments or questions you want to have in your plan.

Children may not learn the concepts or new information in a lesson the first time you present them. That is okay. It takes many repetitions to teach some concepts.

Now, we will use the same process for planning comments and questions to use during and after the experience you have planned.

Use Steps 2 through 5 from the transparency. Write comments and questions to use during and after the planned activity. Be sure to think about what children might say or do that could guide you in the language experience. You will have 15 minutes to work on this. Work on one partner’s lesson first. Then, work on the other partner’s.

Refer to the playdough example and your handouts if you need ideas.

Any questions?
As participants are planning, walk around the room and check to make sure they understand the homework assignment and are getting their handout completed accordingly. If not, stop them and demonstrate the strategies again for the whole group. Check to make sure partners are working together, not individually, to plan lessons.

After 15 minutes, call the group together.

Do you have any questions about the assignment and what you have planned so far?

Did you notice that we planned *comments* and *questions* to use before, during, and after an activity, but we did not write down specific *responses* to children’s comments and questions? Obviously, without knowing what the children’s comments and questions will be, we cannot plan specific responses to their comments and questions.

...continued...
However, you were asked to anticipate or guess some of the things children might say to help you prepare your responses. Also, the list of words you wrote for the activity can be used as an opportunity to introduce new words and ideas to the children. We want to follow the children’s lead in conversations, but, at the same time, we want to think about new words and information that we can introduce. Please role-play the during and after comments and questions like you did before. Take about 8 minutes for both role plays.

After 4 minutes, remind participants to switch roles

This is the peer practice model we mentioned in the Overview Module. We have already competed the first box.

You have:
planned, role-played, and modified your lessons.

Part of your homework assignment is to teach the lesson you planned today.
Now, look at the next page of your assignment. This is the page to use after you have taught your lesson to children. This is the box that says, “Reflect what you learned after the lesson was practiced or taught.”

The first question asks, “What were the children’s responses to the strategies?” When you answer this, write what you heard the children saying or what you saw the children doing when you used the strategy with them. When you asked children open-ended questions, did they talk more or less? Did they stop paying attention or seem more interested because the strategy was being used? What surprised you when you used the strategy?

You don’t need to write or describe how the children reacted to the activity. For example, don’t write things like, “The children liked playing at the water table.” Instead, tell us how the children acted when you used the strategies of making comments, asking questions, and expansion.

The second section asks the questions, “What will you do differently the next time you use the strategies?” and “What will you do that’s the same?” Write how you will use the strategy differently next time based on the children’s responses. In other words, if the children didn’t answer any of your questions, what will you do differently the next time you ask a question?
In the *Questions* section, write questions about the strategies that you want me to answer at our next session. You can also write what you think about the strategies or any other comments you have.

Take a few minutes to read through the playdough example for ideas on completing this page of the assignment.

Any questions or comments about this page? Again, paragraphs are not necessary!

When completing Handout L-11, don’t feel you have to use the strategies perfectly every time you practice them. It is okay to mention the problems you had using the strategies. When we discuss the assignments at our next session, we will talk about the challenges you had and learn from them.

Questions about how to reflect?
While one of you is teaching your lesson to children, the other will be there to observe. When you are observing, you will take notes on L-12. You do not need to turn this in.

When you are the observer, you are the learner, not the evaluator. There is no evaluator in this model. We are all learning together. At no time do you say to your partner: “You forgot to ____,” or “You did ____ wrong.”

Please read the example. It contains notes that one observer took when observing her partner teach a lesson.

When you take notes, write comments that will help you remember what you want to do when using the strategy. What did you learn from watching your partner teach a lesson using the strategies that you want to do when you teach?

As you observe, write down questions you want to ask your partner about the experience. Remember, you want to learn from your partner. Some sample questions are listed on this handout.

Questions or comments about the peer partner model?

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You will have an opportunity to meet with your partner and discuss your observations during the next class. You will use the questions you wrote on Handout L-12. You won’t need to turn in Handout L-12, but please bring it to class.

You don’t need to discuss your observations with your partner after the session. Just say “Thanks” and leave!

We are going to watch a demonstration of peer partners reflecting. As you watch, please think about the following questions:
- Did the peer partners focus on the reactions of the children?
- Did the peer partners focus on the use of the strategies?
- Did the peer partners criticize or point out any errors?

Use this handout as you watch the video to see how peer partners observe lessons.
After watching video, take about 5 minutes for questions

Again, in this model, the observer is a learner, not an evaluator.

Take a few minutes to meet with your partner and set a time and date when one of you can teach the lesson and observe.

Allow 4 minutes for participants to agree on schedules

Please bring Handouts L-11 and L-12 with you to the next class on _____. We will discuss them, and then I will pick up your Handout L-11 assignments so I can review them.

Today, we learned ways to engage children in conversation. We used the C-A-R strategies of Commenting, Asking questions, and Responding to children’s comment and questions.

Does anyone have any questions about the strategies or the homework assignments?