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Methods for Increasing Child Participation in Interest-Based Language Learning Activities

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People use shopping lists, weekly calendars, post it notes, schedules, day-books, and other methods to help them remember to keep appointments, organize daily events, and otherwise keep in mind things that need to be done or accomplished. How many of us have gone food shopping thinking that we would remember what we needed only to find out that you forget an item or two?

Remembering what one needs to do or take care of becomes more taxing when you have to remember to do things not only for yourself but others as well. This is the case for parents of young children where the children's needs, activities, appointments, and other "have to dos" are the responsibility of the children's parents. This is especially true for parents of young children with disabilities who more often than not have additional things that need attention for their child's learning and development.

This *Everyday Child Language Learning Tool* includes three different methods that a parent can use to remember to engage his or her infant, toddler, or preschooler in everyday activities as sources of interest-based language learning opportunities. Increasing child participation in interest-based everyday family and community activities is one component of the language learning intervention approach developed at the *Center on Everyday Child Language Learning* [1, 2]. Findings from a review of studies using the different methods found that these types of "reminders" were associated with better child language outcomes [3].

Increasing Child Participation in Everyday Activities

The methods for increasing child participation in everyday activities for promoting language development are a reminder list, weekly calendar, and daily schedule. The use of any one of the three methods assumes that the interest-based family and community activities being used as sources of child language learning opportunities have already been identified using some type of child interest activity assessment procedure. The reader is referred to our two *Everyday Child Language Learning Tools* (Numbers 2 and 3) for ways of identifying infant, toddler, and preschooler interests. The Appendix includes the three forms for recording the everyday activities that can be used by a parent with his or her child to promote a child's language development.

Reminder List

The reminder list for remembering to provide a child interest-based everyday activities includes space for listing up to 12 different activities. The list is used to "jog one's memory" to provide a child interest-based everyday learning activities. Parents often use different lists for different days of the week depending on what needs to be done and which activities will be used with a child.

Weekly Calendar

The weekly calendar includes space for listing a child's interest-based

activities and for checking or noting which days of the week a child will participate in the different activities. The calendar helps one keep track of which activities will be used on which days of the week. Parents often make multiple copies of the same calendar and post them in different rooms of the house for home-based activities and carry one with them for community-based activities.

Daily Schedule

The daily schedule includes space for listing a child's interest-based activities and for recording the times of the day a child participates in the activities. The times of the day can be individualized and include specific times of a day (9AM, 10AM, 11AM, etc.) or different periods of the day (mornings, afternoons, evenings, etc.). Some parents prefer to list the chores, routines, and other activities on the daily schedule in the time slots across the top of the schedule in the order in which they occur on a particular day (wake-up time, child bath time, breakfast, etc.).

Implications for Practice

The three different methods for increasing child participation in interest-based everyday language learning activities are purposely flexible so that any particu-

lar method as well as the different ways each method can be used with a child are likely to be useful to a parent. Both our experience and research indicates that different parents have different preferences for one of the three ways of remembering to provide a child interest-based language learning activities. It is therefore best to take the time to figure out which method is preferred by a parent before suggesting they use one of the methods to be sure it is one a parent prefers and which fits into the family's everyday life.

References

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- Dunst, C.J., C.M. Trivette, and M. Raab, *Caregiver-mediated everyday child language learning practices: I. Background and foundations*. Everyday Child Language Learning Reports, 2013. Number 1: p. 1-8.
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Appendix

1. Everyday Language Learning Reminder List
2. Everyday Language Learning Weekly Calendar
3. Everyday Language Learning Daily Schedule

Everyday Language Learning Reminder List

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DAY _____

I want to remember to give my child lots of interest-based language learning opportunities during as many times as I can.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

Raab, M., Dunst, C.J., & Trivette, C. M. (2013). Everyday language learning reminder list. In C. J. Dunst, M. Raab, & C. M. Trivette, Methods for increasing child participation in interest-based language learning activities. *Everyday Child Language Learning Tools*, 2013, Number 4.

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