

Step 2: Establishing Easy Speech

Goal: The child will produce words, phrases, and sentences using easy speech in structured modeling tasks.

In this step, the child will practice using easy speech in very structured game activities. Work will progress from words to phrases to short sentences, thus controlling the length of the linguistic component. Work will also progress from imitative to stereotypical and/or carrier sentences to questions and answers to short one-to-two sentence responses. Again, the length of the linguistic component is controlled.

Model slow, easy speech while doing each task (about 90-110 words per minute initially) and use slightly exaggerated inflection patterns. Avoid competitive activities or make sure the activities are set up so the child always wins. Model a positive attitude by saying things like, "It's okay to make mistakes," or "I had fun even though I didn't win." Include an occasional normal disfluency such as a whole word repetition (1-2 times) or a phrase repetition or revision so the child realizes that some disfluency is acceptable.

Two variations of directions are possible in this step depending on the child's age, severity of the problem, or level of awareness. For most young children (ages 2-5) with mild to moderate disfluencies and little awareness of the problem, a totally indirect modeling approach is recommended.

For older children with moderate to severe disfluencies and some awareness, you might consider a direct modeling approach. Explain to the child that there are two ways to talk — a hard way and an easy way. Then, tell the child that you want her to learn to talk the easy way. At this time, you might want to introduce the character, EZ, the animal who only talks using easy speech.

It's not necessary to complete every activity within each objective of this step. Progress through the four objectives in order, but move on to the next objective as soon as you feel confident that the child can successfully complete the objective. In doing so, you may often only use one or two activities at the imitation and stereotyped/carrier response levels (Objectives 1 and 2).

You should, however, use imitation or stereotyped/carrier responses whenever introducing a higher level response to prepare the child for success. For example, when introducing new vocabulary, return to imitation. This allows the child to become familiar with the words before having to say them. Similarly, to prepare the child for Objective 4, use descriptive sentences that focus on attributes (color, shape, size) and functions.

Suggestions for Support Providers

Invite the child's parents/caregivers or teachers to observe and/or participate in an activity or demonstrate how to play the activities. If possible, have them practice so you know they understand how to use easy speech.

Send home copies of the activities in the Materials Book as indicated in each activity. Since a given activity may be used to elicit several response types (e.g., imitative or carrier sentences), it is imperative that you provide explicit directions for the response type to be used at home.

Encourage parent(s), caregivers, and teachers to have a 5-10 minute quiet time with the child each day to play the games. Share Home Letter #2 and/or Daycare/Preschool Letter #2, pages 102 and 103, so all support people understand the rationale for what will happen during this step.

Objective 1: The child will imitate words, phrases, and sentences using easy speech in structured activities.

Procedure

Model words, phrases, and sentences for the child while participating in structured activities. Then have the child imitate. Initially model a slightly slower rate (about 90-110 words per minute) and a slightly exaggerated inflection pattern (ball ↗, fish ↘, baby ↘). Later, model a more normal inflection pattern at a rate which seems to be optimal for eliciting fluency from the child. This rate may be 90-110 words per minute or slightly faster.

Begin by having the child imitate words, then phrases, and then carrier sentences like "I have a (blank), I see a (blank), This is a (blank)," or "Here is a (blank)." Finally, move on to descriptive sentences. Usually you will only need to present 5-10 words before introducing phrases. Then you will often only need 5-10 phrases before moving on to carrier sentences and then descriptive sentences. You may be able to move through all four responses in one activity and go on to an Objective 2 activity.

Indirect modeling: Model the response in easy speech and encourage the child to "say it like I do" or "say what I say."

Direct modeling: Tell the child, "Let's use our easy talking while we play this game. You say what I say using nice, easy speech." Or you might introduce EZ and use the following directions. "This is EZ. There are two ways of talking — a hard, pushing way and an easy way. EZ uses the easy way when he (she) talks. Listen to him (her) talk. Now, let's talk the way EZ does while we play this game."

What if the child is fluent, but doesn't model your rate or inflection? Continue the activity without comment. Simply repeat what the child said using easy speech so she hears the target behavior, but don't demand exact modeling.

What if the child stutters instead of modeling easy speech? Remind the child to "say it like I do (or EZ does)." If the child still stutters, repeat the word or phrase in easy speech and move on to the next response. If the child continues to have trouble, try saying the responses in unison or try using a hand gesture to indicate the inflection pattern. If the child consistently stutters on certain words or words beginning with certain sounds, eliminate them. Re-introduce them once the child has gained some success in modeling.

Activity 1

Materials: purse or shaving kit, comb, toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush, etc.

Home Activity: Purse or Shaving Kit, Materials Book, page 8 or 9

EZ Puppet

Name _____

EZ will help you with your speech.



Objective 4: The child will produce easy speech in the presence of interruptions.

Procedure

To desensitize the child to disruptions, arrange for interruptions to occur during any of the activities in this section. Do only as many activities as you feel are necessary to desensitize the child to interruptions. Introduce the interruptions while the child is modeling imitative responses before expecting the child to model more difficult response types. Arrange interruptions in the following progression:

- incidental disruptions present because of an open door
- contrived noise interruptions such as dropping pencils or knocking over books
- contrived movement interruptions where you are looking away from the child, moving materials, or getting up and walking around the room
- people interruptions such as having someone knock on the door to talk to you
- verbal interruptions where you interrupt the child once or twice while he is talking to you

Because interruptions are often present within the home, it isn't necessary to send home activities that target this objective.

What if the child begins to stutter? Discontinue the interruptions and reestablish fluency. When interruptions are reintroduced, reduce the response complexity.

Activity 1

Materials: any play-oriented task in Step 2, Objective 2, Activities 1 - 29; Materials Book, pages 8-11 and pages 23-51

Home Activity: none

Directions: Follow the directions for any of the activities and add interruptions to the session. Adjust the response level to include carrier/stereotyped responses, questions and answers, or short formulative responses as appropriate.

Activity 2

Materials: any picture task in Step 2, Objective 2, Activity 30 or 31; Materials Book, pages 52-72

Home Activity: none

Directions: Follow the directions for either activity and add interruptions to the session. Adjust the response level to include carrier/stereotyped responses, questions and answers, or short formulative responses as appropriate.

Dishes and Silverware

Name _____

Cut out the pictures.

