Pragmatics

- ◆ Communication in Nonverbal Children and Adolescents
- ◆ Beginning Communicative Intentions (One-Word Stage)
- ◆ Conversational Acts in Preschool Children
- ◆ Conversational Acts in School-Age Children and Adolescents
- ◆ Nonverbal Communication in Verbal Children and Adolescents
- ◆ Social Interaction Skills
- ◆ Classroom Communication Skills
- ◆ Classroom Social Survival Skills
- ◆ Narrative Discourse in Children and Adolescents

Watching language unfold in children is a wonder to see. The human brain starts preparing before birth for language learning. At only two months of age, a baby begins uttering sounds that go together. These babbled sounds soon lead to conversational babbling and cooing so that a baby learns the pattern of speaking-listening-speaking with another person, and thus pragmatics is born. Children soon learn that they can communicate—that there are reasons to talk, things to talk about, and people to talk with.

Children who live in an environment rich in love and connections with others use all that is available to them to reach out and connect with other people. They use gestures, movements, facial expressions, sounds, and finally recognizable words to affect other people's behavior. Later, they use their developing semantics and syntax to connect ideas.

This ability to intentionally affect others and be affected by them is basic to social living in relationships. It is the domain of the area of linguistics and philosophy known as *pragmatics*. A textbook definition of *pragmatics*, in its broadest sense, is the study of the use of language in context for the purpose of communication (Ninio and Snow 1999). Pragmatics is the most general area of language since the purpose of language is to affect others whether through words, signs, gestures, posture, facial expressions, or writing. Listening, sound production, syntax and morphology, vocabulary and semantics, and social skills all exist to give us a means to connect with others—to communicate.

Observing language growth has become even more fascinating because of recent advances in brain research and the effects of early enrichment. Researchers have linked spurts in brain growth to spurts in young children's language use and behavior. It is now known that an enriched environment stimulates a young child's brain and language (Diamond and Hopson 1998). If children live in an environment rich in spoken and gestural language, language explodes at about 18 to 20 months. Children learn new words at a phenomenal average rate of 10 or more per day. It is also widely accepted, as Chomsky (1999, p. 41) has asserted, that language "is something that happens to the child placed in an appropriate environment." Diamond (1998) and her researchers believe that a young child's experience in "seeing, hearing, and forming words stimulate neural dendrites and circuits in the brain and causes the left hemisphere's language centers to grow and specialize" (p. 135). Bathed in communication, the child reaps brain stimulation, emotional development, and language growth.

Children who do not develop language through experiences of interacting with others and exploring their environments demand the attention of many professionals. Parents and caregivers may need direction for early enrichment experiences with their children. Gestures and signs may need to be taught to enhance abilities to interact until speaking is possible. Individualized treatment plans are needed to help these children communicate.

Inferences, Predictions, and Outcomes

Yearly Goal:	to perceive, explain, or use hidden, unstated verbal meanings and to grasp their implications (absurdities, inferences, outcomes, predictions)

Individual Objectives	**Intervention Objectives**
1. Detects inconsistencies or absurdities in a role play. (José role-plays talking into a pencil like it's a telephone. "What's wrong with that?" *"You write with a pencil."*)	Detects inconsistencies or absurdities in role plays from a classroom story. (A student holds a book upside down while "reading." "What is wrong here?" *"She's reading the book upside down."*)
2. Detects inconsistencies or absurdities in a pictured scene.	Points out absurd actions or objects in a curriculum-related picture. ("Look at this picture of a rodeo. What do you see that's wrong here?" *Student points to a horse with horns.*)
3. Explains inconsistencies or absurdities in a pictured scene. ("Look at this picture of penguins in a desert. What's wrong here?" *"Penguins live in cold places, not deserts."*)	Explains absurd actions or objects in a classroom picture. ("What's silly about a horse with horns?" *"Cows have horns; horses don't."*)
4. Corrects inconsistencies or absurdities in verbal materials of increasing length and complexity (sentences, paragraphs, stories, recorded dialogues). ("Correct this sentence by changing words. 'A duck barks.' " *"No, a dog barks."*)	When listening to sentences based on a classroom lesson, corrects them by changing the words in the sentence. ("Correct this sentence by changing words. 'Three hundred miles is a short distance.' " *"No, three hundred miles is a long distance."*)
5. Explains inconsistencies in verbal materials of increasing length and complexity (sentences, paragraphs, stories, recorded dialogues).	Explains what is wrong in sentences, paragraphs, or stories from classroom texts. ("Listen. 'Ryan was scared when he saw the thunder in the mountains.' Was anything wrong?" *"Yes, you hear thunder; you don't see it."*)
6. Predicts future outcomes of pictured situations by selecting what will happen next from among several outcomes. ("In this picture, Sarah fell and cut her knee. Will she ask for a Band-Aid or sing a song?" *"She will ask for a Band-Aid."*)	While looking at pictures with a partner, chooses what will happen next from among several outcomes. ("In this picture, Allison is turning in her homework and the teacher is smiling. Will Allison be punished or will she get a sticker?" *"She'll get a sticker."*)
7. Predicts future outcomes of pictured situations. ("Storm clouds are gathering over the lake. What might happen next?")	After pulling pictures from a grab bag, tells what will happen next. ("The girl is watering a wilted plant. What could happen next?")

Literacy: Reading

Part 1: Learning to Read
- ◆ Reading Readiness (grades preK-K)
- ◆ Phonological Awareness (grades preK-K)
- ◆ Reading Accuracy (grades 1-3)
- ◆ Reading Fluency (grades 1-12)
- ◆ Reading Comprehension (grades 1-3)

Part 2: Reading to Learn
- ◆ Reading Comprehension of Narrative Text (grades 4-12)
- ◆ Reading Comprehension of Expository Text (grades 4-12)

Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) have become increasingly involved in all aspects of literacy instruction. Their educational background in linguistics coupled with the definition of literacy support that involvement. *Literacy* is defined by Section 3 of the National Literacy Act of 1991 (Public Law 102-73) for English speakers as "an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential." Literacy is inclusive of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It involves the relationship between the literate uses of spoken and written language. It makes sense that the scope of practice for SLPs includes reading instruction. Their participation on the IEP team to plan intervention for students with reading disabilities is critical.

Reading can be defined as the processes by which a person constructs meaning from printed symbols. Reading is a complex cognitive, perceptual, and linguistic process. However, reading can be divided into two general parts: decoding and comprehension. *Decoding* is the process one uses to transform print to words. *Comprehension* is the process by which one understands and interprets language. Decoding and comprehension are equally important. To decode without comprehension is not reading, just as attempting to comprehend without decoding is not reading. This simple view clarifies a complex topic for planning reading instruction. In early grades (K-3), instructional goals focus on helping students *learn to read*. In later grades (4-12), we help students *read to learn*.

Most children learn to read somewhat quickly, but unfortunately learning to read is a challenge for surprising numbers of children. Reading disability comprises up to 80% of students who receive special education instruction. Shaywitz (2003, p. 28) reports results of her studies that indicate some 20 percent of school-age children were reading below their age, grade, or level of ability. The National Research Council concluded in 1998 that the education of 25 to 40 percent of U.S. students is imperiled because of poor reading ability (Shaywitz, p. 30). This is unfortunate because reading is the major avenue to learning. It is the key to success. If you do not read and write, you have a difficult time making it in life.

Older Students and Individuals with More Advanced Stuttering

Yearly Goal:	to communicate effectively in all speaking situations by using strategies that will enhance fluency and make stuttering easier

Individual Objectives | ### Intervention Objectives

Establishes the use of cognitive and self-instructional techniques that will facilitate the development of attitudes, self-concepts, and abilities that are consistent with long-term maintenance of improved fluency and an easier manner of stuttering

Individual Objectives	Intervention Objectives
1. Understands and applies knowledge of how speech is produced.	Discovers what parts of the body are used to produce speech as the SLP asks leading questions. ("What body part stores air for speaking?" "*Lungs*.")
2. Demonstrates more knowledge about stuttering and how it differs from normal speech production.	Identifies characteristics of fluent and stuttered speech modeled by the SLP. ("Listen to these two ways of speaking. Tell me how my fluent speech is different from my stuttered speech.")
3. Demonstrates an understanding of what normal disfluencies are and what stuttering is by listing, describing, categorizing, and/or giving examples of each type.	When given a list of disfluency types and examples, categorizes them as either normal disfluencies or stuttered disfluencies.
4. Identifies normal disfluencies and stuttering in the speech of others and in his own speech.	While listening to a tape recorded speech sample, accurately identifies normal and stuttered disfluencies. ("Make a tally mark on your paper each time you hear stuttered speech.")
5. Demonstrates understanding of the therapy process and the necessary commitment by completing assignments and responding to questions.	Consistently completes homework and practice assignments.
6. Identifies negative feelings and attitudes about speaking and stuttering and modifies them as necessary.	Uses a visual tool to list or draw his own specific negative feelings and attitudes about speaking and stuttering in order to begin changing them. ("I want you to draw a picture of your stuttering." Teaching note: After the drawing is complete, discuss the drawing with regard to things in the picture that could represent negative feelings or feelings of being out of control, such as monsters, chains, etc.)
7. Identifies positive personal qualities.	Uses a visual tool to list or draw his own personal qualities. ("For each finger on your right hand, tell one of your positive personality traits.")