

Language and Literacy for Infants and Toddlers

[Video begins]

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[Video ends]

Judi Stevenson-Garcia: Hi, everyone. Welcome to our second infant and toddler Teacher Time episode. I'm so excited to be here with you today. I'm Judi Stevenson-Garcia, and joining me today is Treshawn Anderson. Treshawn recently joined our team here at the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning, and she's going to be co-hosting our Teacher Time webisodes going forward. She's an expert in infant and toddler development, so we're excited to have her on our team. Hi Treshawn, welcome to Teacher Time.

Treshawn Anderson: Hi, Judi, and hi all of you guys, it's so great to have you guys here. I'm so happy to be here. And we're excited to talk with you today about the development of language in learning for infants and toddlers. So we've heard from many of you this week on MyPeers about how you support language and literacy development in English, home languages, and tribal languages as well. So, as we just watched in this video with Ms. Keisha, it's so important to make sure that we provide lots of back-and-forth communication, even with the youngest babies, offering new words, responding to their actions, and showing them that you're interested in what they're interested in.

Judi: Exactly, it's so great to see that and we're going to get the chance to watch that video again in case you came in halfway through or missed part of it, we're going to watch it again in a little bit and we're going to talk more about how Ms. Keisha is supporting language development with her young children. And it's your interest in supporting language and communication that's inspired us to focus this episode on just two of the infant and toddler language and communication sub-domains in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, or the ELOF, as we like to call it. So today, we're going to talk about vocabulary and emergent literacy.

But before we dive into that, I'm going to give you some information about this webinar. So we're using the Adobe Connect feature and I'm just going to give you a little bit of an outline in terms of what you need to know to make the most out of this webisode. So, at some times we're going to ask you to chat in the chat box. Treshawn or I will say, "Let us know what you think." You guys that are already doing a great job introducing yourself; so nice to see everyone, and yes Callie, happy Friday, I can't tell you I'm so happy it's Friday.

So I'm glad you guys are taking time out of your day, especially on a Friday afternoon to spend with us to learn more about how you can support the children and families you work with. So

we're going to use, in addition to the chat box, questions that we have for you, if you have questions that come up while we're talking or while we're watching videos, please put them in there and we'll be happy to answer your questions. And also, in the chat box, Jan has already said hello, we have Jan Greenberg, she's also part of our team here at the DTL, and she's going to be facilitating the chat room. So she'll answer questions that you have, if you have technological issues, or if you are having trouble with anything around the Adobe Connect, she can answer that. And then she also will be putting some resources in there for you when we mention resources, she's hanging out in there, so hi Jan.

Oh, Jan's saying hi. Hi, Jan. There's also going to be times where I might do a quick check-in with you. And if you look at the top of your screen there's like a little person holding their hand up and if you ... I'll ask you to raise your hand and you can click on that and the hand will come up right by your name and we'll get to see you. So, let's give that one a try.

If you are excited about having a few days off in the next couple weeks, go ahead and raise your hand. Oh, I see lots of hands. I think everyone's excited. Going to raise my hand too, I'm excited. Yes, I'm looking forward to having a few days off at home with my kids in the next couple of weeks. So that's how you raise your hands when we do questions like that, and then what'll happen is our friend Lauren, who's supporting us and running this webinar, she'll clear out everybody's hands so the next time I ask question you can raise your hand again. If you look down at the bottom left-hand side of your screen, there's a viewer's guide and that is just a guide that we created to kind of help you [Inaudible] take notes as we watch the webisode and you can either download it and print it out and then write your ideas on there or you can even fill it out—keep it on your computer—and you could fill it out on your computer.

But it's just a place for you to put your thoughts and ideas. We're going to have quite a few videos in the session today, so if you're listening on the phone, you're not going to be able to hear the audio for those videos. So, if you have the capacity to listen through your computer, that's going to be the best way.

And if you're listening through the phone you can mute your phone and turn on the audio of your computer for the videos if you want. If you can't, for some reason, hear the videos, or sometimes they play differently depending on your internet server, you will be able to watch them again. We're going to post this webisode on MyPeers next week, and you'll be able to watch the full webisode complete with the videos. If you get disconnected at any time from the webinar, just use the same link to get back in, and hopefully you should be able to reconnect with us.

And then finally, at the end of this webisode, we're going to post a link to an evaluation form, and we'd really appreciate it if you would complete that evaluation because we use that information to improve the next webisodes that we do. And when you complete the evaluation, you can download a certificate of completion for your participation in the webinar. And if you're viewing this webisode with colleagues on one computer and only one person is registered, you can forward the evaluation link to your colleagues who also viewed the webisode so that they can complete the evaluation and receive a certificate of completion.

And also, Treshawn and I will stay on for a few minutes at the end if any of you have additional questions or if you're looking for additional resources, Jan's always really good at giving some extra resources if you have questions or want additional ideas, but we'll hang out for a little bit, about 10 or 15 minutes after the webisode if you want to stay around and chat. So, just as a reminder for you, when we talk about teachers, when we talk about Teacher Time, we really are referring to any adults who work in group care settings like teachers and family child care providers.

We also see that there are a lot of you on here who are home visitors, and so hopefully, this information will be helpful for you, not only in the work that you do as a home visitor, but for also the support that you provide the families that they care for their children. You may work in a classroom with several infants or you may be a family child care provider supporting infants, toddlers, or older children, so we hope that this information it's really going to be helpful for you in whatever role you're in, and that you'll find specific strategies that will really work for you in your setting. So we want this next hour, or 55 minutes, to be as interactive as possible, so keep the chatroom going. And I'm going to just orient you really quickly to what's going on with Teacher Time.

So for those of you who were here with us for our last infant toddler episode, you'll know that we have eight total Teacher Times. We have four that are focused on infants and toddlers and then we have four that are focused on preschoolers. And we really hope that each of these episodes ... Our goal is to show you real-time challenges and successes that teachers have shared with us. We asked many teachers and family child care providers who work with infants and toddlers daily to tell us about where their challenges are, and where they've had success in supporting children's growth and development. We're using those stories as a place to start this season and really to guide the content that we're providing. So each webisode highlights culturally and linguistically responsive practices that support all young children's development and learning.

And this includes children who are dual language learners. We have a special guest today who's going to really help us think about that. And we're also going to share some examples of highly individualized teaching practices to help you provide an inclusive environment for children with suspected delays or a diagnosis of disabilities.

And then finally, just like last year, all of the Teacher Time episodes, including the first one in the series, and today's, are going to be available for a short time on MyPeers, and then permanently on the ECLKC. OK, so that's all the business. Treshawn, you want to take us into our topic?

Treshawn: Yeah, sure. Thanks for taking us through all that house cleaning. Let's dig into our topic for today ... Yeah that was helpful. So today, we're going to focus on vocabulary and emergent literacy. And these are two components of the language and literacy domain in the ELOF. Let's start with vocabulary or words.

So take a minute in the chat box ... Our first question of the session, well second, "Why is vocabulary so important for infants and toddlers?" So, if you can take a minute to tell us what

you think in the chat box about why is vocabulary so important for infants and toddlers? Let us know; we'd love to hear from you.

So just to highlight some of the main points on why vocabulary is so important for infants and toddlers. So we know that from research that a large vocabulary is important because it's the foundation for children's learning to read and understanding what they read. So the vocabulary in the ELOF is found in the domain Language and Communication, and it suggests that by 36 months, children are expected to learn and understand an increasing number of words used to communicate with others.

And this connects with the sub-domain Attending and Understanding, and by 36 months, children should use an increasing number of words to communicate and have conversations with others, and a lot of you guys highlighted that in the question in the chat box. Babies also attend to the sounds of language in their environment even before they're born, so in utero they can hear language, they can hear sound.

Babies move from babbling to then understanding spoken words and then speaking or signing their first words. Signing is really cool. Toddlers then learn to speak new words at a very rapid pace and use language to express their needs, ask questions, and engage in short conversations with us. And this applies also to children learning English, home languages, and tribal languages, although we need to be sure to communicate with families about children developing language in their home language so that we have a clear picture of all the words children know in all the languages that they're hearing you using. And with children with diagnosed disabilities or suspected delays, they may need some additional supports or modifications depending on what their specific learning needs are.

So, one example is, some children may need listening devices to help them hear spoken languages better or some children need extra support in expressing themselves. So, it may be helpful to learn to sign some words that are meaningful to the child. And so, as an example of this, my daughter, Lillian, is usually a shy child around others, and I say usually very loosely.

[Laughing]

And when she was a toddler in her classroom she didn't speak as often to teachers, although she had the vocabulary, but she was just kind of shy and she didn't want to talk in her classroom. Instead she just signed everything, and we did teach her quite a few signs, probably more than baby signs or what teachers knew.

So her teachers, thank goodness, checked in with us, and asked about certain signs that she was using, and we pretty much taught the teachers the signs that she could use so that they could better communicate with her.

So see, they learned to sign meaningful words that we used in our home in order to support her language in the classroom, and that was really helpful for us. And then lastly, children that are dual language learners are often building vocabulary in two languages, so it's important to remember that the words that they understand and say will likely be different in their home language and in English, and that's perfectly fine.

Judi: Yeah, we have ... It's funny that you mention that about your daughter in signing, I have a similar situation with my son. When he was a toddler, because he's bilingual, there are some words he only knew in Spanish, and so I had to make sure that I told his teachers, you know, what those words were so that they knew what he was saying 'cause there were some words he only had in Spanish and not English, so that's definitely really important.

And so we know that as a teacher and someone who works with young children, you have an important role to play. You expose children to interesting and new words, and you help children begin to learn and use these words to express themselves, and definitely their emotions as many of you have mentioned. And you do all of this within the context of nurturing and responsive interactions.

So what does that mean? We're going to watch Ms. Keisha again, so the same video that we just saw, but watch closely this time and look for how she interacts with the two young children, and keep an eye out for how she supports vocabulary development. [Video begins]

Ms. Kiesha: How does that feel on your gums, Alexandra? How does that feel? Does it feel hard? Does it feel hard? Do you want to try something different, Mia? Oh, thank you, good cleaning up. You put it in the basket. Go put it in the basket. What's this? What's this? What is that? You want to see? Come, come. You feeling a little shy? The giraffe. Let's see how the giraffe works. Let's try it. Look. Twist. Twist it on. Twist it off. You want to try? Twist. Yes, you're turning it. You made it tighter.

[Video ends]

Judi: Wow. Yeah, you guys are spot on with what you're saying—what you're saying here. She's repeating words, that she's focusing, she's putting more emphasis on some words. She's putting words to action, right? She's speaking slowly, she's asking questions, she's talking to them like a real person, right? Like they're real people. Having a conversation with them. She's labeling the children's actions.

Somebody in here said sportscasting, that's basically what that is, right? We're just going to talk about what you're doing. "Oh, you dropped this?" "Oh, you're standing up now." That's sportscasting, which is basically just giving them language describing what they're doing. Gives them lots of new words. She's at the child's level, she's repeating words, using social emotional connection. This is a really warm and engaging interaction, right? So there's safety and security, and then while she's engaging the child, she's really building her skills. This is all fantastic. Nice observations everyone.

OK, so now we're going to move on, Treshawn, to emergent literacy.

Treshawn: Yeah, so let's basically chat about emergent literacy. So, in the chat box, tell us what you think emergent literacy looks like for infants and toddlers. Babbling while looking at a book, that's great. That's their way of reading to us, right? Being exposed to books. Easy finds in our environment like McDonald's and Walmart, I think those are like my kid's first words, maybe not McDonald's.

[Laughing]

Storytime with parents, not just using technology, so actually getting that interaction with parents. That's great. Pointing to different symbols; definitely emerging literacy.

Touch and feel books, using writing tools to make marks. Yeah, definitely. Infants and toddlers love just holding stuff that big kids like to hold. Reading aloud. Great, so you guys are spot-on with what we were talking about with emerging literacy. So emerging literacy refers to knowledge and skills that lay the foundation for reading and writing. And so Emergent Literacy sub-domain in the ELOF suggests that by 36 months, children are expected to pay attention to, repeat, use some rhymes and phrases, or refrains from songs, recognize pictures and some symbols like you guys talked about in the chat box, comprehend meaning from pictures and stories, and making marks, there we go we see that again.

Making marks and using them to represent objects or actions, excuse me. And for infants and toddlers emerging literacy is embedded in the domain language and communication in the ELOF. And so this reflects how closely connected these emerging literacy skills are to very young children beginning receptive, expressive, and vocabulary skills. And as infants and toddlers listen to and repeat songs and rhyme and explore books, they are gaining literacy skills. And so, language and literacy skills can develop in any language. And for the most part, they'll develop first in the children's home language.

So supporting home language really helps prepare young children to learn English, and then learn the importance of engaging with their parents and family members. Tribal programs that focus on language preservation and revitalization may have program or community-wide efforts to teach the tribal language to children, parents, staff, and community members. Language is so important for cultural connections, continuity, and a sense of identity as language is an important part of our cultural identity as well.

And lastly, for children that have diagnosed disabilities or suspected delays, may need additional supports and modifications depending on what their specific learning needs are. For instance, if you have a child that's blind, you can use objects to illustrate a story you're reading that the child can touch and hold. For example, if you're reading a story about bath time, you might give the child maybe a small towel or a bottle of shampoo or soap or a tub toy at different points during the story that help to illustrate the story. How cool would that be?

Judi: That'd be awesome.

Treshawn: I think I need that anyway. Wouldn't it be fun?

Judi: I think what's really important about what you said there, especially with infants and toddlers is that we make sure that we're individualizing our approaches for each one, right? And meeting them where they're at, whether they have a different language or a different ability, that we're thinking about, so we're not just like, you know, reading a book, one book for all of the children in the same way, it should be different based on the child's interest and their abilities.

So, and you know this as teachers, right, you have this important role to play and you can help children begin to understand signs, symbols, and words, and to make them use marks to communicate ideas. I feel like everyone's going to go back and help their kids, you know, start

making intentional marks at kind of those early literacy times. So we're going to watch a video of a teacher supporting children in this area, supporting emerging literacy. So, as she interacts with the young children, keep an eye out for how she's supporting emergent literacy, and then tell us in the chat box what you notice and then we'll chat about it after.

[Video begins]

Teacher No. 1: And a brush, and a bowl full of mush. Look at the little kitty. Say, "cat." Cat, cat, cat, meow. What does a cat say?

Teacher No. 2: Meow! How many cats do we have? Two. One, where's the other one? He's sleeping.

Teacher No. 2: Find the kitty cat.

Teacher No. 1: Find the cat. Not there? Missing, OK. And the brush?

Teacher No. 2: Where is she? What does she say?

Teacher No. 1: And a fat old lady who was whispering, "Hush." Hush, hush. Good job Eileen. Good night, room. Very good. You have two in your hand.

[Video ends]

Judi: I love that video.

Treshawn: I wish I had those little chalkboard characters.

Judi: I know right? She's moving her whole body, right? The teacher's using visuals. Yeah, exactly. Involving the child and the reading of the story, right? It's not static, it's an interactive ... This is an opportunity. And the teacher, she's like every teacher right, she's got someone in her lap, she's got someone behind her, she's engaged with the child. There's a lot of skills going on that teacher has right there. Asking and waiting for the response of the child. I saw somebody earlier mentioned that, like sometimes we're so eager to like give them all this language that we forget sometimes it's really important to stop, especially for these older children who are really starting to express themselves, to give them a chance to say what they're thinking, or to respond to what we said, that's really important. The teacher's [Inaudible] ...

The child yeah asking questions, reading aloud, and using props, all really important to kind of just get the children involved. This is great. Child participation. Yeah this is not, you know, just especially ... Well, you can't get a bunch of toddlers to sit down and all listen to one book in the same way, so this is the teacher really meeting their individual needs, allowing the child to lead it and respond appropriately—exactly. Encouraging language and literacy. So, this child was interested in this book, I mean [Inaudible] book is pretty engaging anyway, "Goodnight Moon" is so great. But to have those additional props, let the child be up and moving around, and kind of diving where they go with the story, I think is really fantastic. This child is young and already really loving books.

So, thank you for those responses. We're going to take some time right now to think about what the effective teaching practices are that support vocabulary and emerging literacy. We've

already seen videos of two teachers really engaging in some effective practices around that. So we invited some experts to share some important information and strategies with us. So we have Carrie Germeroth who is one of our NCECDTL partners, and she was a guest expert on last season's infant and toddler Teacher Time episode.

And then Dr. Linda Espinosa is a member of our Research to Practice Board and a professor emeritus at University of Missouri Columbia. So she was our language and literacy guest expert on the pre-K Teacher Time last season, if you watched any of those. And they both got together to discuss vocabulary and emerging literacy. So we're going to take a few minutes and watch their conversation and as you watch, please remember to add comments or questions in the chat box, and we can talk to you about them. And then we'll chat together again at the end of their conversation.

[Video begins]

Carrie Germeroth: Thank you so much for being with us, Dr. Espinosa, and I wonder if you would start by just talking a little bit about how we can support vocabulary development with infants and toddlers?

Dr. Linda Espinosa: Well thank you for having me, and I'm happy to talk about it. So vocabulary with infants and toddlers is part of a whole area of development that I like to call oral language. Because oral language is foundational to eventually learning to read and comprehend what you read. And so oral language includes vocabulary and for infants and toddlers that's what their little brain is attuned to do. As the provider, as the caregiver, of course you're going to want to hold the infant, and through that process of holding and looking at, and touching, you establish this warm, trusting relationship.

So everything that you teach the child, everything you expose the child to, really emanates out of this close, positive, nurturing relationship that you have. So you're holding the baby, whether you're diapering the baby, whether you're going to get the baby something to drink, you're kind of talking to the baby and showing the baby the objects in the room.

And that's kind of the beginning of vocabulary, that an object always is going ... This is always a seal, OK? It doesn't change its name because somebody else is holding it, it's a seal is a seal, but a seal eats a meal. So you start using language in original and creative ways, they start to hear it. An interesting thing that moms naturally do, that I think caregivers can model, as well, is they use what's called mother ease. They emphasize the sounds in a word, which is really the, again, it all ties into eventual complex language and literacy. So, you go seal. Can you see the seal? But you start to use words in creative ways that exaggerate the sounds that are in the words and the child will eventually attach that sound to that object and know that there's this one-to-one correspondence.

One of the things that I think we need to be careful about because we do know it's important to label things and talk about what you're doing, so they get an oral exposure to what the—what your actions mean in words. But one of the things that I think we need to be careful about is responding to the baby's cues. If the baby looks at something and is really interested in, you go with it. "Oh, you're looking at the cabinet. Look up there, there's the cabinet up there," and you touch it, and you show it, and you do all of that.

But that need to respond to the interest of the child, don't constantly intrude on what they're thinking about, what they're looking about, what they're investigating on their own. So you have this willingness to go with the baby and expand what they're seeing, give it words, start to help that child understand the world around it, and how it operates.

Carrie: Right, so being really responsive and finding those meaningful moments in the conversation. Are there other specific strategies that we can use with infants and toddlers? Maybe with some of the books we have here?

Dr. Espinosa: Sure, sure and one of my favorites—of course, I have others as well—but I do love these books. Well, this is perfect for an infant toddler because it has, you know, the hard, not paperweight pages, so that they will chew on it, they will hold it, they will bang it, they will do everything, but they love to touch. So they love to touch everything. This is touch and feel baby animals. And they're going to grab for it and they're going to start to rub it and then that gives you an opportunity to bring up, you know, how things feel. "Oh, that feels soft and why does that feel soft? Stroke the soft baby rabbit. The baby rabbit is, no, no come to it." Over and over and over again.

Carrie: And you may never get past the first page, and that's OK.

Dr. Espinosa: [Laughing] No.

Carrie: They're going to be so fixated on touching—touching rabbit.

Dr. Espinosa: 'Til they get to that beautiful elephant and then want to scratch this [Inaudible]. But these books are just, I think they're gems. Any book that's got simple, repetitive words. "Choo, choo, choo," you know, that's a really nice one because it repeats, or anything that has a pattern, an alliteration that you can, and then they start to understand this word. Ball, bat, baby—whatever. They start to hear the actual sounds in the words and that they begin with the same sound.

Now remember at this age, they're infants and toddlers, we're talking about sounds; we're not talking about letters. So we're not going to take a baby and start saying, "Baby, ball, this starts with a B, what other letters start? What other words start with the letter B?" No, that's really too early. And little rhymes, you know, little short repetitive rhymes. They won't repeat them, they, will even though they can't articulate them, you will hear them repeat the rhythms of those little sounds, those little nursery rhymes.

Carrie: That makes me think of songs too, right? So songs would be another great strategy that you might suggest, would that be correct?

Dr. Espinosa: You are right.

[Video ends]

Judi: OK everyone, that was a great conversation between—between our friends Linda and Carrie. And what we want to do for you is show you a couple examples of teachers who are engaged in these practices. So Treshawn, you want to intro these videos?

Treshawn: Yeah, so we're going to take a few minutes to watch some teachers who are going to use some of these strategies in their own learning environment that you saw in the video with

Carrie and Linda. I know I learned something from that video, hope you guys did too. So let's take a minute to watch. As you observe, let us know in the chat box what strategies you observe in this video.

[Video begins]

Educator: Look! Squeeze it and watch the water go up. See the water up in there? You squeeze it and it goes in the spinner. How fun.

Look, there it goes around and around and around. In and around. Look, there they go, Xaiden. They're going fast, fast, fast. Fast, fast, fast. Hi, Emma. Did you come to dump some water with us? Xaiden, would you like to have my measuring cup? There you go, you can use my measuring cup. You want to use the pan? Pour it in. Fill it up and pour it in. Like this, Emma.

Xaiden, that one was Emma's. Here, would you like to have mine? You can have mine. It's OK; there is enough for everyone. Look, Em, watch this, watch the spinner. In it goes so, so slow.

Whoa! Look at theirs, Xaiden.

Theirs goes really, really fast. Wow. Fill it up, scoop it, fill it, and dump it.

[Video ends]

[Next video clip begins]

Educator: Look at Julius. What color? Got red, purple. What color do you have, Serena? Blue. Say blue. Going to put the chalk in the cup, Julius? You want to still color? Let's color. We still color. Put it away; put one chalk back. [Video ends]

Treshawn: The teachers are modeling behaviors and languages that help children learn and express themselves, which is great. And tone of voice, that's a new one. So tone is really important in helping children understand, socially emotionally, what you're meaning, what you're talking about, and kind of the social context behind what you're saying. Some strategies I saw was the teacher's very warm interactions with children like getting on their level, making eye contact, hearing children's emotion.

The teachers waited for responses—we're seeing a lot of that. And then also teachers are using self talk and parallel talk in describing what they're doing, and some of you guys are saying that in the chat room so got some good people here today. And then the teacher's demonstrating some meaningful words like scoop it, fill it, and dump it. And the teachers are offering opportunities to make marks and marking tools—sorry, mark making tools. And lastly, as we saw, they're supporting children's vocabulary and emergent literacy development can take place in an outdoor environment, as well as indoor, so it's great that we saw both of those settings.

Judi: Exactly, I think sometimes we think you know, "Oh, emerging literacy is when we're reading books or, you know, when we're writing with some instruments or some markers on paper," but we have the opportunity to support both vocabulary and emerging literacy in any part of our learning environment, whether it's indoors or out. So we're going to transition a little bit and just think a little bit about how children's home language experiences plays a part

in and an important role in their development of vocabulary and emerging literacy. And this is true for all children, but especially true for children who are dual language learners.

So we asked Carrie and Linda to give us some specific strategies for supporting children who are learning another language or multiple languages at home. So as you listen, share in the chat box the strategies that Linda mentions for supporting vocabulary development and emerging literacy with children who are dual language learners. Or you could tell us about the areas where you feel you could use help in this area or places where you have strengths. So let's take a few minutes and watch.

[Video begins]

Carrie: So, you've shared some really nice strategies that are great for all learners, including dual language learners—all children. But we know that children who are dual language learners could benefit from some additional scaffolds. What would you say are the top one or two scaffolds that we could provide children who are dual language learners in terms of vocabulary development?

Linda: Well, I think you're exactly right. The strategies we use, the language we use, the interactions we engage in are all good for all the children. Children who don't understand English have some additional needs to be able to comprehend and to gain from the activities that they're engaged in in early care and education setting. I would say there probably two, if I had to limit it to two the two that I would pick are: one, have that in-depth conversation with the families and if you need an interpreter, fine, but find out from the families what languages they use, what their feelings are, what their values are around the language, what customs they have that are attached maybe to their cultural background.

So you understand why the child might know very little in English and might not comprehend during book time and you understand how to capture that family's strengths. You start to develop this two-way relationship with families, you bring some of what's really important to them, like their language, you bring that into your classroom setting and you can do that through labeling, not everything, but labeling. And through the kinds of books that you have, that you have available, that it looks like the print they're familiar with. These stories also represent important stories from their culture.

Carrie: They can see themselves in the books.

Linda: Absolutely, that you find a way to make sure the child experiences some kind of continuity between home and school. And there is someone at some time who uses that language with that child conversationally, reading the books beforehand, pointing out the words in the classroom. The programs that I've run we've had tremendous success in getting people to come in and work with the children so the child hears their language and they understand the teacher values it, and the teacher can learn a few words from child, if there's no one else to teach the child. But these are very simple things that are very significant.

Carrie: We can easily do every day.

Linda: Yeah, with—with infants and toddlers and families.

Carrie: Wonderful, well I think you have shared some really great tips and strategies and information that we can all benefit from. Thank you so much for your time. [Video ends]

Treshawn: That was so helpful. Many thanks to Carrie and Linda for taking time to share some really important information about supporting our children's learning and development. So let's take a few minutes to talk about the context for all of this learning. The consistent positive relationship you develop with your children and the rich language interactions you have with them, help them to learn to use language and words to express their curiosity about objects, and materials, and the people that are in their environment. And as children grow, they show increasing interest and curiosity about the world around them.

When you narrate what children are doing and what you're doing, when you use interesting and new words, when you share books, when you say rhymes, when you sing songs in English and home languages and tribe languages, and you give children the tools they need to communicate their curiosity and creativity, and all of that language and those opportunities to learn and use children's support, the language supports children's development in another domain, which is Approaches to Learning. And Approaches to Learning focuses on how children learn, rather than what they learn—little different.

So this domain also includes initiative and curiosity and creativity, and by applying these skills, children learn new skills and set goals and meet them. And they learn—they learn to do things that are challenging and frustrating or things that just simply need time to accomplish. So let's watch a video of Ms. Keisha. [Video begins]

Ms. Keisha: Should we make a discovery? Should we check and see what's inside the avocado? What do you think is in here? What do you think is inside? Inside the avocado. Andrew, you're working on getting inside the avocado? Andrew's opening up his avocado. Let me see friends. You are experimenting with rolling your avocado because it's so round. You too, Mia, you're going to roll it around the table? You helping Mia with your—with your fork? You want to use it on your avocado? Let's see. Do you want to try and open another avocado? Let's see if I can help you. Ah. Yes, you're taking out ... You have dark green on the outside of the avocado and light green on the inside of the avocado. Mia, you're eating it, how does it taste? How does it taste? It smells so good.

[Video ends]

Treshawn: I'm a native of California, so avocados are a staple in our house.

[Laughing]

It makes me warm inside to know that children are playing with avocados 'cause we do the same thing. But providing a safe environment that's nurturing, and nurturing response of daily interactions to help children approach the learning in a positive way. So when you're curious and when you wonder aloud about—about what you're curious about, then children develop curiosity. And they hear you using those words. And they'll learn to use those words to then express themselves and their curiosity.

And when you're creative and you use language in creative ways, using new and interesting words and making up your own words, and rhyming, children then learn to be creative and they

use language in creative ways. A family's values and beliefs in cultural practices really effect how children approach and engage in learning. So it's important to find out from family members what language or languages they speak at home, how language is used in the home, like what do they use for words for comforting, for managing their child's behavior, and what their children already know and enjoy in the languages that they hear at home.

Knowing what families value in terms of approaches to learning will help you understand the children that you work with so that you can better meet their needs. And for example, in our house, we try, and again I say try very loosely, not to use the word "no" at home for redirection; instead we use uh-oh, mostly with our younger son. So we've communicated that with our teachers, although thankfully they're not using no in the classroom. But just to be sure, we communicated our family values to our teachers so that hopefully they're using that, you know, in the classroom or other forms of redirection.

Judi: Yeah that would make a huge difference in terms of what your son feels, in terms of, you know, how he's redirected if he's used to being redirected in one way at home and then experience something very different, that could be challenging for him, especially really young kids. I love the comments that we have about this video. The exploration of the avocado's great 'cause the outside of an avocado is really fun, but the inside is really interesting, too, in terms of like a sensory experience but I just love how Ms. Keisha's just hanging out and following the children's lead, she's creating a very safe space for them to just explore, and that's what's required.

And that's what we mean when we say creating this environment supports children in their approaches to learn, right? So the only way that she can work on supporting their development of vocabulary is to first create this safe environment where they can explore. And when they feel safe in exploring then she gets to build the vocabulary on top of that. The kids are hanging out, she's hanging out with them, you know, a child puts the mashed avocado right up in her face, she's like, "Oh that's cool," you know. So, it definitely is ... That's the environment you want.

You can tell that the children are comfortable and that they're used to being given options in terms of what they explore and what they do. And because that setting is there, it allows them to really get into it, and it allows her then to build vocabulary on top of it, which is perfect. I think that's why you like this video, right, Treshawn?

Treshawn: Yeah, exactly why I love it too.

Judi: OK, so the last thing that we're going to talk about today is ongoing assessment. So, if you remember, and we've talked about ongoing assessment before. Observing and documenting children's growth in children ...

Their growth in vocabulary and emergent development—emerging development requires this focused observation and intentional engagement with children. So if you think about Ms. Keisha in that video, what do you think she would be observing for? And what do you think she would want to be documenting while she's working with those children and while she's observing them playing with the avocados? She might be want to listening for new sounds or new words that children are expressing. Want to be looking at their fine motor skills. You saw

that little boy with a fork, right? He was trying to get that fork into the avocado, which is a great opportunity for him.

So we want to make sure that we focus on listening for and documenting the moments when children show us that they understand what we're saying, and when they use words to communicate with us and with others, we want to pay close attention so that we notice a small shift from maybe just banging a marker on a piece of paper to really intentionally trying to make a mark, a dot, or some careful line. We want to make sure we're observing those so we can document that shift. Oh, it's starting to become intentional now. It's also essential to have two-way communication with families, especially for these young kids. We want to know what their experiences are at home, what the language is, language or languages are that they're hearing, that they're understanding, that they're using at home.

As I mentioned before, my son uses different words at home and then he does at school and that's important for teachers to understand so that they have this idea of the whole child and their development. And their experiences with printing or writing might be different at home than it is in a group care setting depending on their family's literacy practices or what family value in terms of early emerging literacy.

So it's really important to make sure that we are communicating in a bi-directional back-and-forth way about experiences and how children are growing and developing, so we have that sense of the whole child. So we're going to talk a little bit about how you collect ongoing assessment data to help you individualize your strategies to support children's vocabulary and emerging literacy. But first, let's listen to a teacher talk about effecting infants and toddlers who are dual language learners—they speak Spanish and English. And as you listen, feel free to share, again, in the chat box what you're thinking. I feel like this is something that we ... Is very common experience about how do we understand the whole child and what they know and are able to do.

[Video begins]

Educator: The assessment and individual report right now that we have, you know, for the preschoolers, they do—they do English and Spanish. In our situation, because our younger toddlers, we assess them in the language they're speaking. Like I said, our children ... I have to assess them in English because I'm going to assess them in Spanish when they're not going to understand me, so I have to go with the English. And the other ones I do it in Spanish, because the same thing when I go to the home visit, I have to do the home visit in Spanish. The other parents want it in English, so I have to talk to those parents, those two other parents in English because they want it in English, so it has to be, you know, assess the children that know English, and the other ones in Spanish. That's how we assess them. And that's how I do observations.

On the Spanish ones, I do the Spanish observations. On the English, I do English. So when I go to the home visit, that's when I'm going to show the parent, you know, their language, and, you know, so they can understand, too, what I'm doing in the room and what kind of observations I'm doing because if I'm going to do it in Spanish, then the parent, I'm pretty sure she's going to ask, "But my child doesn't understand in Spanish, why you assessing my child in Spanish when he only knows English," so, you know, that's why I do it under home language. [Video ends]

Judi: So this teacher presented some really good strategies for what she does to assess her students. That were also ... And her approaches align with her program's dual language policy and guidance. So, depending on where you are and what program you're working, you may have different approaches, but I think what was really important here is that she recognized where her child, each individual child, where their strengths were in their language, and then did her best to assess them in the language that they understand. And so that is definitely a first key, a goal to have when you have young children is to find out what languages the family speaks to their child at home and then use that language to assess—assess the children because that's the language that they know best, that they're most familiar with.

And then we also want to make sure that the observations and documentations that we use are representative of the whole child. That if we can, if we have the chance to ask questions or have conversations or interactions in the language that the child knows best, and if not you have the opportunity, hopefully, to maybe speak with the families about what the child knows or is able to do at home, when they're hearing their home language.

But we want to make sure that we share these observations with parents. If you have home visiting or if you have the opportunity to visit their homes, you can see what the languages are that are being used in the home, and have conversations with families as to what you observe and what they observe. A couple of other important points to make about assessing infants and toddlers, including children who are dual language learners, we want to make sure that we're using this information to plan our continued interactions and learning experiences. So we want to make sure that we're documenting the important stuff, the big stuff, or even the little shifts that I was mentioning in children's—in children's knowledge and skills.

But what we are noticing that is new or is important so that we can understand how they're developing and what to do next. If each of those children at the table with the avocado is at a different place with their language, with their vocabulary, maybe with their expression of words, and so the teacher wants to make sure that the opportunities she provides and the responses she gives to each of those children is based on what she knows about their knowledge and skills. We could also, as I mentioned, use this information to engage with families about what we're thinking about how their children are developing, especially with really little ones.

Sometimes, it's hard to tell what the progression is, and so for parents to hear and families to hear, "Wow your child is doing something new," you know, they might not recognize that going from banging a marker on a paper to drawing lines is a big deal—it's a big deal. So we have that opportunity if we document it to share it with families and let them know about how their children are learning and developing. We can also support them in thinking about supporting language and literacy at home.

So, you know, asking them for what they see or hear during everyday activities, like meals or diapering or getting dressed or bath time or when they're playing with siblings, if the children have siblings at home or cousins or family and friends, what happens out when you're about shopping or running errands? Sometimes, we need to cue parents in to observing and documenting themselves, and letting us know what it is that they see about how their children are changing in terms of vocabulary.

I was just at the pediatrician yesterday and there's this little girl who came in and she was babbling, babbling, babbling, babbling—it was the whole time in the waiting room—and the secretary at the front desk was like "Wow, she is really talking now," 'cause I guess she hadn't seen her in a while, so the last time she saw her, but it was like this significant change, you know, and you could tell. She did not stop chattering. I didn't understand anything she said, but she did not stop chattering the whole time.

So—so that was exciting to see. But how fun would that be to hear as a parent? You know, wow, I really noticed that your vocabulary, your child's vocabulary is increasing or changing. I think that that could be really affirming for families to hear as well. One thing, too, that I was kind of [Inaudible] in the chat box ...

Treshawn: Connie mentioned a great way that they do assessments in her school is they use videos. So, they take little short clips, video clips of children. And so, you know, sometimes, these ELOF—or whatever assessment tool you use—those goals might be, you know, cumbersome for parents or, you know, just ... You want to put it in parent's language to make it easier for them to understand, but if you have a video to show them what that means, and, you know, I feel like that strengthens the assessment as well, parents can actually see what's going on at school then, you know, then what might be different at home, so you have ... You can pull parents in that way so they can see what's going on at school, which would be fun.

Judi: Definitely. Yeah, we, you know, we have the—the—the benefit of having the ELOF which really shows us the goals, as you mentioned earlier for children in this area. But helping parents understand what it means to be moving, making progress in terms of learning and development, I think video can be really helpful, especially for progression, right? Sometimes, in the craziness of raising kids, you forget sometimes what they're, how to look back and then see that they're still some develop ... Sometimes you don't get to pay attention to that, so having someone do that for you is really helpful. I like that family collaboration helps in our planning, I like that collaboration, right? This is not just me telling you everything you need to know, it should be this back-and-forth collaboration because the parents are, you know, the kid's first teacher, right, so we want to build them up and support them in doing all of these great things as well. So, well we are ... This hour just flew by for me.

Treshawn: Yeah it did.

Judi: Like I said at the beginning, we'll stay on for a few minutes to chat with you if you guys have additional questions or want to talk about anything more. Like I said, Jan is really good at giving us some resources.

If you were ... [Inaudible] Aside there are resources listed at the bottom that you can use to support your goals in working with young children in their vocabulary and emerging literacy. I also wanted to bring to your attention, we have a MyPeers community; if you're not a part of it, our Teacher Time community is a great place to join.

And on MyPeers, there's also a new community; it's the Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practices community. CLRP is much easier to say, but this is a great group that's really focused on these practices that are culturally and ethically responsive, so that's a great group

community. It just started up, so if you want to join, you can just request to join, and you will join. We also have Text4Teachers.

You can find more information on that, about that on the ECLKC, and ELOF as well, which is an app that you can download onto your phone and it has all of the information you need about the ELOF, including the goals that we talked about today, and some really great opportunities to learn and see more about what these mean in action ... The video.

So, thank you so much for being here.