
Preschool Parent-Child Language Functions and Early School Literacy

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- Describe the Children at Risk: Infant and Child Development Research (ICDP)
- Present theory underlying parent-child language functions
- Link language function patterns to Reading, Oral Expression and Written Expression in Grades 2 and 4
- Integrate findings to other dimensions of the children's lives

PARENT/CHILD LANGUAGE INTERACTIONAL FUNCTIONS

A. CONTEXTUAL/DOING FUNCTIONS

The Contextual/Doing functions of language are used in interpersonal interaction,

...to negotiate with others, to get what you want ...to regulate the behavior of others, and to express yourself.

A. CONTEXTUAL/DOING FUNCTIONS

INSTRUMENTAL function - used to satisfy material needs.

"I want" function,
e.g. "I want juice"

REGULATORY function - used to control the behavior of others. "Do as I tell you" function,

e.g. "Give that back to me" "Put that down"

INTERACTIONAL function - used to interact with others.

"Getting along", "me and you" function,
e.g. "Patty cake, Patty cake". "Thanks, Sugar"

PERSONAL function - used to express identity, feelings

"Here I come" function,
e.g. "I'm tired", "I like juice"

PARENT/CHILD LANGUAGE INTERACTIONAL FUNCTIONS

B. DECONTEXTUAL/LEARNING FUNCTIONS

The Decontextual/Learning functions of language are used to obtain information, to observe and to learn in order to get information about the wider world. They are referred to as decontextual because they are not dependent on the present context.

B. DECONTEXTUAL/LEARNING FUNCTIONS

HEURISTIC function – used to ask and answer questions
e.g., "Tell me why" function, e.g. "What's that?"

IMAGINATIVE function used to create a world of one's own through words, sounds and nonsense
" Let's pretend" function,
e.g. "I'm a cat.. Meow"

INFORMATIONAL function used to label objects and to teach and learn about the world. "I've got something to tell you" function,
e.g. "Hot!", "Cup", "See the bunny, "The leaf is green"

Mother's Statements to Child in One Hour

	Two Years				Three Years			
	Clara		Jade		Clara		Jade	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Pragmatic/Contextual Inst. + Reg. +Int. + Per.	146	62.0%	108	22.0%	67	50.0%	95	23.0%
Informational/Decontextual Heur. + Info. + Imag.	91	38.0%	376	78.0%	67	50.0%	319	77.0%
Totals	237	100.0%	484	100.0%	134	100.0%	414	100.0%

IQ Scores and Report Card Grades

	McCarthy Scales of Children's Abilities		WISC-R						
	3 Years	6 Years	10 Years	2nd Grade			3rd Grade		
	GCI	GCI	IQ	Reading	Oral Expression	Written Expression	Reading	Oral Expression	Written Expression
Clara	117	89	76	C	C	C	D	C	C
Jade	92	95	93	B	C	B	B	B	B

Outcomes...

If these findings hold, there may be some potential implications for curriculum for parenting groups; prenatal programs, especially those for younger mothers, family support programs, and child care programs.

It is important for us as teachers, school administrators, community advocates and social workers to remember of how much communication in children's early everyday routines may influence later development and academic outcomes.