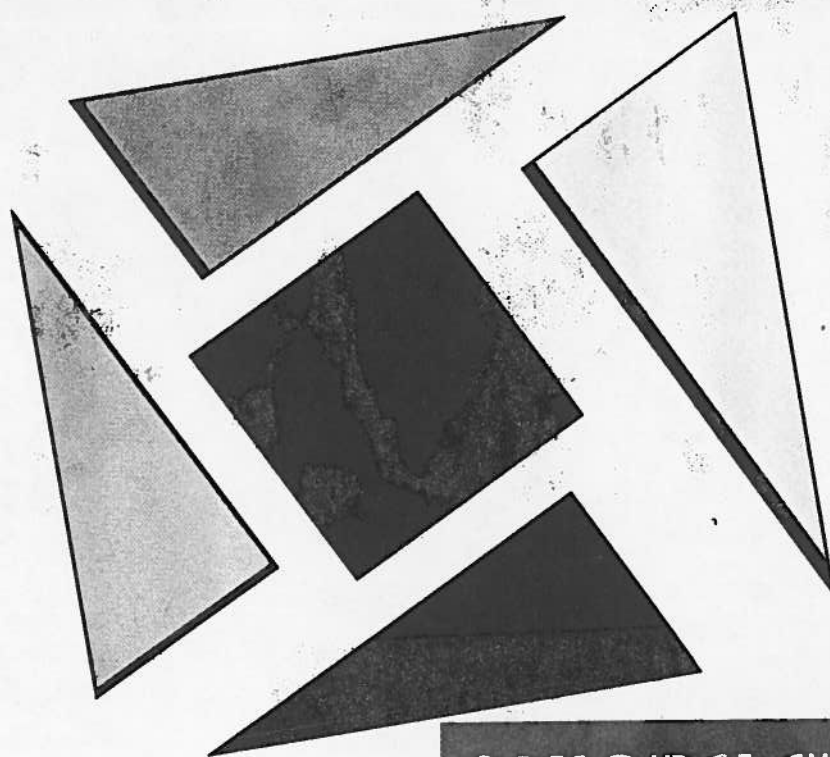# DISCOVERING WITH WORDS AND SIGNS

Sign Talk
Development
Project

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR DEVELOPING A BILINGUAL AND BICULTURAL PRESCHOOL PROGRAM FOR DEAF AND HEARING CHILDREN

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DISCOVERING
with Words
and Signs

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Editor: Greg Evans

Dedicated to the children,
our hope for
a bilingual and bicultural future.

Funded by the Child Care Initiatives Fund,
Health and Welfare Canada

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The most important appreciation is to the families of Sign Talk Children's Centre. Thank you for allowing us to be visitors in your lives during this project. Without you, none of this would be possible.

The Anderson/Ryle Family
The Barry Family
The Bomak Family
The Bosko Family
The Butkans Family
The Carlin/Neufeld Family
The Copland Family
The Demers Family
The Demianyk Family
The Dusko Family
The Evans Family
The Garbacki/Halbesma Family
The Gendzelevich Family
The Geisbrecht Family
The Halas Family
The Harding/Boboski Family

The Hrabi Family
The Husack Family
The Krotenko Family
The Mousseau Family
The Nagle Family
The Otto Family
The Patton Family
The Quinn Family
The Rabu Family
The Richards Family
The Sanders Family
The Sousa Family
The Wandering Spirit Family
The Wiebe Family
The Wozniak Family
The Zimmer Family

FOREWORD

This manual describes what we, the Sign Talk Development Project staff, have learned while researching a bilingual and bicultural program for Deaf and hearing preschool-aged children. The information comes from three major sources:

- The staff, Board, parents, and members of Sign Talk Children's Centre, a daycare that has provided a bilingual and bicultural program to Deaf and hearing children since 1987.
- The Sign Talk Development Project, a research and training project that has studied bilingualism and bilingual programming in Sign Talk Children's Centre.
- The collective experience of the Winnipeg Deaf community, which has successfully piloted and implemented several innovative programs involving Deaf and hearing people.

The idea of bilingual and bicultural education can seem overwhelming to the newcomer. One can get bogged down in definitions of terms, educational methodologies, and educational philosophies. The differences between Deaf and hearing people can seem intimidating. Those differences can sometimes lead us away from what we believe lies at the heart of bilingual and bicultural education. For us, bilingual and bicultural education is about a community of people, both Deaf and hearing, trying to do the best we can for our children. It means attending workshops and learning about who we are and understanding our similarities and differences. It means expecting conflict, learning how to resolve it, and treating it as a sign of growth. It also means endless fundraising events, early mornings and late nights, and meetings, meetings, and more meetings. We do all of this because we believe there is nothing that equals the experience of learning to see the world through someone else's eyes. Bilingual and bicultural education is about teaching children to become bilingual and bicultural individuals. A bilingual and bicultural program reflects the goals, values, and traditions of two languages and two cultures.

There is no magic involved in developing a good bilingual and bicultural program ..... just jump in and get wet, make sure everyone has a say, accept that mistakes will be made, treat people with the respect they deserve, deal with these mistakes graciously, and make sure everyone eats all their vegetables! These are the keys to bilingual and bicultural education.

Kyra Zimmer
Charlotte Evans
Denise Murray

Contents

INTRODUCTION

With Words
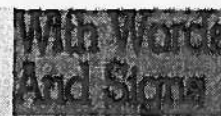And Signs

About this Resource Guide

This resource guide is a resource for people who are either involved in a bilingual and bicultural program for preschoolers or are planning to set one up. We, the Sign Talk Development Project staff, do not claim to be experts on any of the topics included in this resource guide, nor do we suggest that everything contained here will fit your program or your community. This resource guide is our attempt to share what we have observed about providing a preschool program to Deaf and hearing children. We consider this resource guide a "work-in-progress", as we know that striving to be a bilingual and bicultural program is a never-ending process. The information contained in this resource guide simply reflects a point in time in that process. We firmly believe that the way we approach this task will constantly change to fit new information as we learn more about each other and teaching our children.

This resource guide has four sections: 1) the Introduction, 2) Bilingual and Bicultural Programming, 3) Organizational Considerations, and 4) the Conclusion.

The Introduction gives a short history of both Sign Talk Children's Centre and the Sign Talk Development Project. Bilingual and Bicultural Programming provides information on curriculum, teaching strategies, and communication guidelines. This section also includes developmental stages for the acquisition of American Sign Language and spoken English. Organizational Considerations provides structural information on staffing and working with parents, a Board of Directors, and the Deaf community. The resource guide ends with a brief conclusion.

The information in this resource guide comes from many sources. Most of the information on language development, language acquisition, and facilitating bilingual and bicultural development comes from the work done during the Sign Talk Development Project. Much of the information contained in the section Organization Considerations comes from the collective Sign Talk Children's Centre experience. And, lastly, the philosophies and attitudes reflected in this resource guide come from the Winnipeg Deaf community and the teachers, researchers, and leaders who have contributed to it. Finally, without the gracious cooperation of the families that make up the Sign Talk Children's Centre community, none of this information would have been possible.

Sign Talk Children's Centre

Sign Talk Children's Centre is a specialized daycare for children two to five years of age. It offers bilingual and bicultural programming in American Sign Language (ASL) and English. Until STCC was established in 1987 by a concerned group of Deaf parents, no daycare in North America could meet the special needs of Deaf parents and their children. Most of the children enrolled at STCC have Deaf parents who use ASL to communicate with their children. STCC also has Deaf children and hearing children with hearing parents who want their children to learn the language and culture of the Deaf community.

History of Sign Talk Children's Centre

Sign Talk Children's Centre (STCC) is a daycare centre built on a dream. The seed for that dream was planted at a Deaf Culture and Pride workshop held in Winnipeg in April 1985. At that workshop, Deaf parents expressed the need for a specialized daycare that would meet the needs of their Deaf and hearing children. Deaf parents expressed their frustration and concern about sending their children to daycares that knew little or nothing about the Deaf community's language, American Sign Language (ASL), and culture. Deaf parents were also concerned that they would not be able to communicate with daycare staff in their native language, ASL. As well, parents were looking for a daycare that would promote the positive learning of both their language and culture. Traditionally, hearing children of Deaf parents have been influenced by society's perception of Deaf people as "disabled" and their language as incomplete. Deaf parents wanted to have the emerging acceptance of the Deaf community as a linguistic and cultural minority reflected in their children's daycare program.

After investigating several options, members of the Deaf community decided to open their own daycare. A steering committee was created, with both hearing and Deaf members, and in April 1986 the Ministry of Community Services identified STCC as high priority and allocated funds for twenty spaces. After many consultations with community-based organizations and government departments, a Board was formed in February 1986 and in November 1987 STCC was opened.

Sign Talk Children's Centre was established by Deaf parents who wanted a day care centre that was culturally and linguistically sensitive to them and their children. STCC was developed to meet the needs of its families by:

- strengthening the family by encouraging the child's communication skills in both ASL and English;
- encouraging the child to develop a sense of pride in both Deaf and hearing cultures;
- supporting Deaf parents' awareness of their unique language and culture;
- enabling parents to communicate comfortably with the child's caregivers;
- enhancing the child's linguistic competence and positive self-identity in preparation for school and living within two cultures;
- encouraging social acceptance of both Deaf and hearing people as equals and thus "normalizing" both Deaf and hearing cultures;
- offering parents the possibility of building support systems with other parents and/or exploring learning opportunities related to family issues.

For the Winnipeg Deaf community, the need for a bilingual and bicultural daycare was, and continues to be, based on the simple realities faced by its families. Most Deaf parents have children who possess normal hearing; these children are likely to grow up in a home environment that uses American Sign Language but still need to learn spoken English skills for socialization and future school placements. STCC's goals are to provide Deaf and hearing children with a daycare experience that includes support for both English and ASL and provides positive

> *Sign Talk Children's Centre is important to me because it is a place where Deaf and hearing children grow together.*
> *Susan Zimmer,*
> *STCC Staff member and parent*

Deaf and hearing role models. The entire idea of STCC promotes hearing and Deaf people working together.

Based on a dream that a daycare could meet its needs, the Winnipeg Deaf community created a specialized Centre with highly specialized staff requirements. Meeting those requirements became problematic. An evaluation of STCC was conducted in June of 1989 through to January 1990. It showed that hiring bilingual and bicultural staff was STCC's biggest problem. The Centre had always attracted skilled Deaf and hearing individuals, but its Deaf staff did not have access to traditional training in the area of child care. Also, although possessing post-secondary training in childcare, hearing staff often did not have adequate ASL skills and knowledge of Deaf culture. Complicating this dilemma was the fact that both groups of staff members did not have access to formal training that would specifically address their needs. In part, this lack of formal training was because hearing children of Deaf parents (who make up the majority in STCC) were a group whose language acquisition and development was not well documented. Although there was more research on Deaf children of Deaf parents and their acquisition of ASL, there was no test available to measure a Deaf preschooler's competency in the use of ASL. To train daycare workers, both

4

hearing and Deaf, and to provide appropriate language acquisition opportunities, more needed to be documented about STCC's children and how they acquired language - ASL or English. The evaluation further identified the need for increased materials and resources for teaching ASL and Deaf culture to preschool children. At that time, materials such as these were either nonexistent or not available anywhere in Canada nor the United States. After identifying these deficits, the evaluation recommended that STCC pursue funding for a development project that could provide added resources to the Centre's staff and program.

SIGN TALK DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

In 1992, the Sign Talk Children's Centre received a grant from the Child Care Initiatives Fund, Health and Welfare Canada to establish the Sign Talk Development Project (STDP). The project ran for 30 months, from March 1992 to September 1994, and hired three staff members: an English Language specialist, an American Sign Language specialist, and an Office Manager.

STDP was designed to provide more information on how children acquire bilingual and bicultural skills at STCC. The project had four objectives:

1. To assess the hearing children's spoken English language skills.
2. To observe, record, and analyze children's, both hearing and Deaf, acquisition of ASL.
3. To teach the staff and parents to facilitate the children's bilingual and bicultural development.
4. To publish a manual of bilingual and bicultural guidelines for a daycare program.

Bilingual and Bicultural Programming

Bilingual and Bicultural Programming:

In our opinion, an effective bilingual and bicultural program must have three parts: a) bicultural and bilingual people, b) a solid program, and c) policies and guidelines that make sense for the people using them.

Working with a Bilingual and Bicultural Staff

Our experience has taught us that, as a staff, we need cross-cultural training to work effectively together. Much of the conflict that we experience as a staff comes from the differences between "hearing" and "Deaf" perspectives. Staff people sometimes do not come to the job with enough experience in another culture, so training must ' be provided to help bridge this gap. Hearing staff members often do not believe that they have a culture. As majority members, they have rarely had to think about the values and traditions that are part of their culture. Deaf people, as a minority group, are extremely aware of their culture because they have fought so hard for its recognition. Our children belong to both groups, so we must role model positive interaction between the two groups of people. We must learn how to accept other views and incorporate them into our own. And we must learn how to challenge other people's perspectives without judging them.

Cross-cultural training is a very important aspect of team building. The more we understand each other, the better we are able to work together. As a group, we need to establish ways of working and communicating together that allow us to learn from each other. As a first step, we need to learn basic information

6

about each other's culture and language. For our hearing staff members, this means learning about ASL and Deaf culture. For our Deaf staff members, this means learning about English and standard Canadian culture. As a second step, we need to encourage and support the development of bilingual and bicultural skills. As a third step, we need regular opportunities to ask questions, clarify misunderstandings, and find common ground.

As an example, STCC has adopted a set of rules as teamwork guidlelines for its staff. As a starting point, these rules need to be understood by all of the staff members. These rules also contain skills that need to be practised. Simply showing people a piece of paper will not ensure that the concepts will be understood and used. Staff members must also see these behaviours modelled. They must have regular opportunities to talk about issues surrounding the use of these rules. All of these steps take time but are necessary.

These rules are provided as an example of what can be used in your program. A key aspect of these rules is that they were the result of a process involving both Deaf and hearing people. Your program may use different rules, but their creation must include both Deaf and hearing people.These rules were taken from the Christians for the Liberation of the Deaf Community.

AGREEMENT/RULES FOR HEALTHY TEAM WORK:

1. We believe there is plenty for each of us if we cooperate - competition (thinking only of oneself) results in not enough for all.
2. We believe that each person's wants/needs are equally important; that each person has equal rights to express his or her wants/needs.
3. Each of us promises to be 100% honest - I will ask directly for what I want.
4. Each of us promises to share negative feelings or blocks/ obstacles.
5. Each of us promises to share positive feelings and give positive feedback.
6. Each of us promises to follow this: NO ASK = NO ACT
   a) I will not expect others to do something for me without my directly asking for it.   (NO MANIPULATION)
   b) I will not do things for other people if they did not ask directly for it.
   (NO RESCUE)

We believe that staff in a bilingual and bicultural centre are an effective team when members are:

- content with who they are (know their own culture/identity),
- interested in learning another language and culture,
- experienced with another language/culture (if they do not know ASL and English),
- able to view Deaf people (or themselves) as members of a cultural minority not as having a disability,
- open to feedback,
- able to see another person's perspective.

Interactions between Deaf and hearing people have historically not always been positive. An effective bilingual and bicultural program needs to accept this fact and address it. Part of this involves looking at issues that make people uncomfortable. These issues involve staff members' self-awareness or lack thereof. Obviously a hearing staff person who has joined your program to "help those poor Deaf children" is going to get a reaction from your Deaf staff. Conversely, a Deaf staff person who does not believe there is any place for a hearing person in your program will get a reaction from your hearing staff. A staff comprised of monolingual and monocultural individuals will experience a great deal of conflict. A bilingual and bicultural program is not a program that has equal representation from each culture and language. Rather, a bilingual and bicultural program involves individuals who are themselves bilingual and bicultural or striving to become so. An effective bilingual and bicultural program establishes a professional development plan that helps staff develop these skills and attitudes.

The more we learn from each other, the better we are able to work together for a better world.
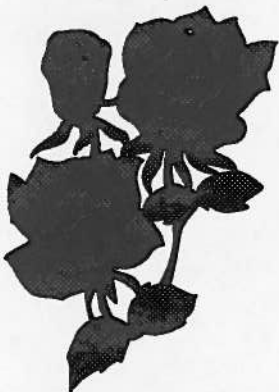
Teresa Hope
STCC Director

MODEL CURRICULUM

The curriculum is organized into three sections; Themes, Daily Routine, and Modifications for a Bilingual and Bicultural Program. The first two sections, Themes and Daily Routine, simply describe the core elements of a good preschool program, whereas, the final section more specifically outlines the needs of a program for Deaf and hearing children.

THEMES:

The preschool curriculum is organized around monthly themes. Each theme has been chosen to reflect topics that are of interest to the children, to allow for the incorporation of basic concepts, and to contribute to the children's awareness of the people and world around them. Teaching of the themes includes activities that foster all areas of development - cognitive, motor, social, and language.

Month	Themes	Special Days
January		New Year's Day
	Healthy Bodies Body Exercise Food/Nutrition Dental/Medical	
February		Valentine's Day
	Senses Eyes/Ears Taste/Smell Touch Emotions	
March		St. Patrick's Day
	Community Workers Safety: Police/Firefighter Medical: Doctor/Nurse/Vet Deaf Community: Interpreters, Parents Services: Post Office Hairdresser/Food Store/Baker	
April		Easter
	Spring Seasons Seeds, Plants, Growing Things Baby Animals Insects	

May

People of the World
Any cultures which reflect the families in the Centre and the community

Mother's Day

June

Save the Earth
Mother Earth
Environment
Pollution
Recycling

Earth Day
Father's Day

July/August

Canada Day

Summer Fun
Dinosaurs
Adventures: Camping, Hiking, Exploring
Crazy Week
Circus
Beach/Picnic

September

Me and my family
Who am I?
Family/Home
School/Routines
Basic Concepts: Numbers, Colours, ABC's, Shapes, Sizes

October

Halloween

Fall
Thanksgiving
Change of season
Harvest/Farm
Halloween

November
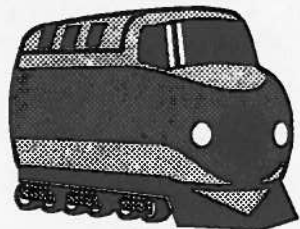
Transportation
  Air
  Water
  Land
  Space

December

Winter
  Winter Fun
  Winter
  Sports
  Holidays

Christmas
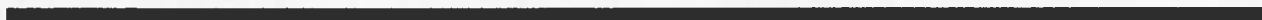
DAILY ROUTINE:

Every day has basic kinds of activities. The order and time of activities may vary throughout the year, but the activities stay the same. The day includes: free play, circle time, group activity, gym/outside play, snack/lunch, and story time.

Free Play:

This time allows the children to direct their own learning, play, and interaction with other children. It is important that this time remain unstructured; however, there are ways that the staff can arrange the environment to provide learning opportunities for the children. One way is to sort the toys and materials into particular areas or "learning centres" within the classroom.

The following are possible ideas for learning centres:

a) House
    table, chairs, kitchen (fridge, stove, sink), plastic food, dishes, dolls, baby items (crib, stroller, clothes), broom, iron and ironing board, and so on.

b) Blocks/ Manipulative
    wooden and plastic blocks varying in size, shape, and colour, miniature sets of people/animals/houses (farm, house, airport, mechanics garage), interlocking blocks (Duplo, Lego, Tinkertoys, Yax), stacking rings, nesting boxes, puzzles, etc.

c) Science
    sensory activities (sand and water tables), plants, pets (fish, mice, gerbils, birds), measuring equipment (scale, weights, rulers, containers), natural materials (rocks, shells, pine cones, seeds), maps, globe, microscope, etc.

d) Library
    books, books, and more books, felt stories, paper, note pads, envelopes, folders, writing utensils (pencils, pens, markers, crayons), chalk and chalkboard, display of the alphabet, etc.

e)   Art
      different kinds of paper (white, coloured, construction, cardboard, poster, butcher rolls), drawing materials (chalk, crayons, markers, paints, pencils), scissors, glue, craft supplies (glitter, stickers, feathers, pom poms, egg cartons, paper rolls, yarn, string, macaroni, seeds, stick-on eyes), and the list is as long as your imagination!

f)   Drama
      costumes, dress-up clothes, hats, scarves, shoes, and a large mirror for viewing and admiring.

g)   Construction
      oversized blocks (wooden, plastic, foam), a variety of cardboard boxes, tools (hammer, nails, saw, screwdriver), scraps of wood, sandpaper, miscellaneous parts of equipment (wheels, springs, bolts).

Each of these centres can be modified and adapted to emphasize the monthly themes. Here are some suggested ways to incorporate the themes into the learning centres during free play time:

a)   House
      The house area can become different places by rearranging the furniture and adding signs and props. For example, it becomes a restaurant if you include menus on the table, and note pads with pencils for the waiters to take orders. In a similar way you can create a post office (with a stamp pad, envelopes, and mailbag), a store (cash register, shopping carts), or a train station (tickets, chairs arranged in rows).

b)   Blocks/Manipulative
      The materials in this centre are harder to adapt to specific themes. Puzzles and games can be selected which show pictures of a particular topic, such as animals, transportation, or growing things. The children can be encouraged to use blocks to build objects related to the theme, airplanes, homes, trees, police stations, and so on.

14
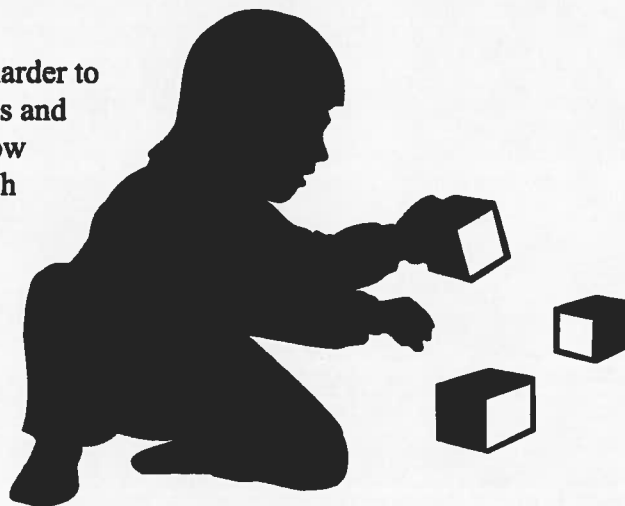
c) Science
This centre allows for experimentation and exploration. The children can test their ideas about how things work and how things are made. Children can learn through exploring and discovery when objects related to the theme are included. For example you can use: different coloured leaves in Fall (with a magnifying glass), snow and icicles in Winter, seedlings and insects in the Spring, and a compost to learn about taking care of the Earth.
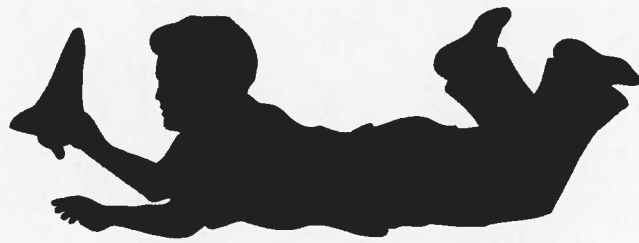
d) Library
This centre is easily adapted to each theme by simply having books that emphasize the topic. Encourage the children to do their own writing related to the theme, perhaps by modelling the books on display.

e) Art
This centre is open to lots of creativity and imagination. The children can create their own individual pictures related to the theme, or they can make a wall poster as a group. Because this centre has so many possibilities, it is helpful to guide the children and pick a specific part of the theme for them to focus on each day. A good way to tie the daily activities together into the larger theme, is to use a bulletin board or mural and add pictures to it every day. For example, if the theme is "Spring" the children can make flowers the first day, caterpillars the second day (which are then mounted on the flowers and leaves), butterflies the third day (placed in the sky above the flowers), birds the fourth day (flying in the sky), and clouds and a sun on the fifth day to complete the picture. Art does not only mean pictures. Art can include a variety of crafts, sewing, clay modelling, and other forms of creative expression.

f) Drama
This centre adjusts easily to each new theme simply by selecting costumes and props related to the weekly or monthly topic. Children can be encouraged to dramatize stories, invent their own dramas and role playing, or just to enjoy dressing up! This centre should be located close to the House centre, as the two areas complement each other and can often be used together to create a new scene for pretend play.

g) Construction
The activities in this centre focus on building structures with tools and   different

materials. The themes can guide the children in deciding what to build, whether a dinosaur, a train, a tree, or a robot. This centre constantly emphasizes the concepts of recycling and reusing.

Circle Time:

This time of day is for more structured teaching and learning. The circle begins with routine activities to emphasize the calendar, the children's names, and the weather. These concepts are repeated daily. After these routines are completed, the theme for the week is introduced and discussed or incorporated into a game. The following are some suggested ways to conduct the circle activities:

a) Calendar

The concepts that need to be incorporated into this activity include numbers, counting, time (today, yesterday, tomorrow), days of the week, and months of the year. Deciding which of these concepts is emphasized will depend on the age and cognitive level of the children in the group. Finding and marking the date on the calendar is the primary goal. The following are some suggestions for this activity: the teacher can use a regular calendar with all the dates written in, and mark off today's date with the children

- the children can take turns marking off the date
- using a grid calendar without numbers, the teacher can write in the number every day
- the children can take turns writing the numbers on the grid calendar
- the children can take turns taping a number card in the appropriate grid on the calendar if they are unable to write the numbers
- the calendars can be marked with markers (making circles or X's), stickers, symbols reflecting the theme (shamrocks in March, or leaves in October)

b) Names

Having all the children identify themselves is a way to take attendance, to teach the children their names and the names of their friends and teachers, and to give each child some individual attention and acknowledgement. The complexity of this task can be increased with the child's age and cognitive level. For example, the child might respond when the teacher says or signs his name (name sign); asking the child to respond when the teacher fingerspells his name is more complex; asking the child to tell her name (name sign) in response to a question from the teacher is the next level of complexity; having the child spell his name is the next step; and finally, the child may be ready to recognize his name in print or

perhaps write it himself. The activity of teaching the children their names can be incorporated into the calendar and weather activities, or it can become a time when the children tell some news about themselves or their families. You can also use guessing games. For example, the teacher can ask, "Who is wearing black pants and a red shirt?", and the child must identify herself.

c)   Weather
The concepts incorporated into this activity include seasons, temperature, and weather vocabulary (sunny, cloudy, rain, snow, storm, etc.). This activity can also be changed to match the age and cognitive level of the children. Younger children could look outside and find a picture to match what they see (sun, clouds, rain, etc.) to describe the weather. Similarly, they would talk about temperature as "cold, hot, cool, or warm." Older children can learn to read a thermometer, show the exact temperature, and use more complex vocabulary to describe the weather, for example, "snow flurries," "thunder showers," "partly cloudy."

d)   Theme Discussion
This activity will vary depending again on the children's ages and cognitive levels and the theme itself. With older children, simply introducing the theme and asking them what they know about it may be enough to start a good discussion. Younger children will probably need objects or pictures related to the theme to give them something to label and talk about. The following are some suggestions for continuing to emphasize the theme throughout the week:

1)   Story/Book - the curriculum themes are commonly available in preschool materials, so finding stories or books that reflect these themes is often possible. Felt stories, puppets, invented stories, and dramatized stories are all variations to reading a story from a book.

2)   Matching Games - these games can incorporate the theme and a variety of basic concepts, such as colour, size, and shape. Objects or pictures can be matched or categorized. For variation, place the pictures around the room so the children must search to find the matching picture or object. The

older children can play a "memory" game trying to remember the location of two similar cards/pictures in an array of cards placed face-down.

3) Guessing Games - children enjoy guessing, and the level of complexity of these games can range from very simple to more complex. A "grab bag" activity keeps young children interested as they put their hand into the bag and see what they pull out! Another activity is to show the children two pictures, place them both face-down, turn one over, and see if they can guess the other one. A game of "20 questions" (or modify to five or 10 questions) is an excellent way to learn about the features of objects and how to give clues.

Group Activity:

This activity follows Circle Time. The Group Activity is a way to extend the theme - emphasizing the concepts and ideas introduced during Circle Time. The activities included generally fall into five categories:

1. Arts and Crafts - the group activity is most frequently an arts and crafts activity because it allows the children to express their own ideas about the theme. This can be a group project and can include the whole range of art mediums - from paper and crayons, to painting rocks or gluing feathers, to moulding with clay.

2. Science Experiment - this kind of activity relates well to themes involving nature, the environment, and how things work. It allows children to manipulate and change objects or materials to see what the outcome will be. Problem-solving and thinking skills are encouraged and developed through these tasks.

3. Cooking - activities involving food is a favourite with children! Plan these activities so the children can do most of the work. Watching the teachers do the cooking does not hold the children's interest and they do not learn as much.

4. Drama/Role Play - these activities allow for lots of creativity. You can follow a script, or modify a story to fit your ideas, or let the children make up their own story. Costumes, props, and scenery can be simple or very elaborate.

5. Field Trips - the most appropriate way to learn about certain themes is to go and see it! A change in environment can also help everyone feel more stimulated and ready to learn. Trips should be chosen to relate to the theme and the children's level of learning. Careful planning is required for transportation, cost, and schedule changes.

Gym/Outside Play:

The primary objective during this part of the day is to develop the children's motor skills - running, skipping, jumping, climbing and balancing are encouraged. Cognitive skills, such as counting, identifying colours, shapes and sizes, can easily be incorporated into the gross motor games.

Story Time:

Story time is an important part of language development. The goal is to expose the children to stories in both English and ASL.

Deaf staff tell stories to the children in ASL. These can be translations of familiar stories, such as "Three Little Pigs" or "Little Red Riding Hood," and their own original stories. Storytellers have differing opinions about whether or not to include cultural modifications to these stories. Some may wish to modify the events of the story to fit a Deaf perspective. For example, when Goldilocks knocks on the door of the Bear's cottage, the lights will flash and nobody answers. Original stories told by Deaf staff often include the Deaf perspective in a more natural way, ie. including people using a TTY.

Hearing staff tell stories to the children in English. Similarly, these may be familiar or original stories, depending on the individual staff member's interest and experience.

Both Deaf and hearing staff read stories to the children from books. Reading the stories in English by the hearing staff is quite straightforward. Reading by the Deaf staff involves translating the story for presentation to the children in ASL. When staff work in Deaf and hearing teams, a hearing staff member can read the book while a Deaf staff member "interprets" or presents the story in ASL.

At the preschool level, reading is not introduced in a structured way. The children are exposed naturally to written forms within the classroom (labels, posters, names, calendars, etc.). Group/circle time also uses written forms when discussing the weekly theme, and through books and closed captioned movies. The children are also involved with activities to learn fingerspelling - identifying and spelling their names, matching printed letters to fingerspelled letters, and natural exposure to fingerspelled loan signs.

Snack/ Lunch:

Besides providing the children with nourishment, meal times are also excellent learning opportunities because the children will talk to get something they want. Language skills, such as asking questions and learning the vocabulary for food items, can be encouraged. Children can also be responsible for helping to set tables and distribute food to the other children.

Transition Activities:

In a classroom of children, changing from one activity to another throughout the day can become disorganized and disruptive without preparation for these transitions. If children finish an activity early, clearly define what is available for them to do. Quiet activities, such as reading, drawing, or puzzles, work well. Let the children become different animals or roles to get from one are to another, by "hopping like bunnies," "slithering like snakes," or "stomping like giants." Regulate which children can move to the next activity by having them identify their written or fingerspelled name, or playing a guessing game, i.e., "Who has a blue shirt?" When the children identify themselves they can move on.

STCC is accessible to all who enter -- it is a magical place!

Liana Price
STCC Staff member

MODIFICATIONS FOR A BILINGUAL AND BICULTURAL CENTRE:

The themes and daily activities included in this curriculum are very similar to those of many preschool and daycare programs. It is important to maintain these similar standards; however, incorporating the following modifications is essential in developing a successful bilingual and bicultural program for Deaf and hearing children and their families.

A) ENVIRONMENTAL MODIFICATIONS:

The environment must be equally accessible to Deaf and hearing people. This includes having TTY's and phones and flashing lights to separately show phone, door bell, and fire alarms. Modifications to the physical structure of the building also allow for better visual access, both for monitoring the children and for communication using ASL. This includes: mirrors on the walls to see what is happening behind you, windows in doors, round tables, light switches outside the room that can be flashed to show a knock, low light switches so children can reach them to get the group's attention, and half-wall dividers between rooms and areas.

These physical features can also be incorporated into the play areas; the house area should include a toy TTY, and wall displays and posters include the fingerspelled alphabet, numbers, and signs.

B) COMMUNICATION MODIFICATIONS:

A bilingual and bicultural program uses the same themes, concepts and activities as other programs. The difference between a bilingual and bicultural preschool program and other programs is that these ideas are being presented to the children in two different languages. The children's exposure to each language happens through natural interaction with Deaf and hearing role models and peers. As ASL is the language that is fully accessible to all, it is the language used during group activities, such as circle time, snack, and lunch. When using English for an activity, such as reading a book or singing songs, an alternate activity must be available for the Deaf children. STCC uses interpreters when guests (who do not know ASL) come to the classroom or on field trips to places where ASL is not used. It may be necessary for a staff member to act as a Deaf Interpreter. Not all interpreters have the training and skills necessary to

match the communication needs of young children. In some situations it is necessary to provide more than exposure to the language and culture through role models. We use explicit teaching, particularly with older children, to help make them aware of cultural behaviours and the appropriate time to use each language. A simple explanation, such as "When I tap you on the shoulder it means that I want you to look at me," can be very effective in helping a child to learn these skills.

C) PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS:

The key factor for incorporating both languages and cultures into all areas of the program is the presence of both Deaf and hearing role models. As these staff members plan and conduct activities they will also reflect the values, attitudes, and behaviours of their own cultures. For example, when playing baseball with the children, the Deaf staff member might explain that hand signals were originally developed to accomodate a Deaf baseball player.

The key factor for incorporating both languages and cultures into all areas of the program is the presence of both Deaf and hearing role models.

Music tends to be an important part of preschool programs. It should not be excluded from a bilingual and bicultural program involving Deaf and hearing children. It is important to be aware that this activity is not fully accessible to the Deaf children and plan alternate activities for them, such as drama, creative movement, and ASL poetry. The choice of participating in the music or alternate activity is left to each individual child, hearing or Deaf.

We do not like to separate the children into "hearing" and "Deaf" groups. We prefer to let them choose which activities are of interest to them and match their developmental level.

Additional planning is necessary for field trips. You may need to arrange for interpreters, as well as provide the destination with information about the group's needs, such as seating for visual access. A travel/portable TTY is essential for field trips to provide independence for the Deaf staff.

Although many materials and resources developed in English can be readily adapted for use in ASL, it is important to have a variety of ASL teaching materials. These include videotapes of children's stories in ASL, games using handshape cards, ASL books and dictionaries, pictures and posters of signs for display. Some of these materials are commercially available, but you will have to make others.

Key Components of a Successful Bilingual and Bicultural Program:

- Deaf and hearing role models
- Exposure to ASL and English
- Recognition of English and ASL as different, and, therefore, kept separate (not speaking and signing at the same time)
- Activities that help language development (drama, stories, books, puppets, etc.)
- Resolving conflict in a way that understands and respects both cultures
- Developing pride and identity in being Deaf or hearing
- Communication between parents and staff (teachers, caregivers)
- Flexible staff members who can modify the program to meet individual children's needs

Teaching Strategies:

Good teaching strategies will be effective for any children, whether they are hearing or Deaf. Effective teachers in a bilingual and bicultural daycare, however, recognize that Deaf children process information visually and will adjust their techniques accordingly. We have used the following teaching strategies and found them successful when teaching Deaf and hearing preschoolers.

GENERAL TEACHING STRATEGIES

Visual Aids:

Use lots of visual aids when working with Deaf and hearing children. They need to see and feel the information to make it real for them. A good rule for teaching is to make sure you use pictures, toys, books, charts, and role plays, or any other visual aid with every lesson.

Experiential Learning:

Our experience has taught us that our children learn more efficiently with "hands-on" activities. As mentioned above, our children need to see and feel information; they need to be able to manipulate it.

Concrete to Abstract:

Teaching needs to be structured so that it progresses from the concrete to more abstract level of thinking, questioning, and reasoning. This developmental process and the corresponding activities and questions that can be used at each level of abstraction are outlined more specifically in the following chart:

LEVEL[1]	SKILLS	ACTIVITY	QUESTIONS
Level 1: Matching Perception	At this level, the simplest level, the child must be able to apply language to what he or she sees in everyday world.	- Identifying - Naming - Imitating	What is this? What did you see? Show me the circle.
Level 2: Selective Analysis of Perception	At this level the child must focus more selectively on specific aspects of material and integrate separate components in a unified whole.	- Describing - Completing a sentence - Giving an example - Selecting an object by two characteristics	What is happening? Name something that is red. Finish the sentence . . .
Level 3: Reordering Perception	The child must restructure or reorder perceptions according to constraints imposed through language.	- Excluding - Assuming role of another - Following directions in correct sequence	Find the thing that is not round. What will happen next? What would she say?
Level 4: Reasoning about Perception	The formulations at this level, the most complex level, require the child to go beyond immediate perception and talk about logical relationships between objects and events.	- Predicting - Explaining - Finding a logical solution	What will happen if . . . Why should we use that? What could you do?

[1]The levels of abstraction in this chart are based on those described in Blank, M., Rose, S.A., and Berlin, L.J. (1978) <u>The Language of Learning: The Preschool Years,</u> Grune and Stratton.

Learning Must Draw on the Child's Own Experience:

Teaching also needs to be about the child. We create relevance by linking the child's own experience to new concepts and information.

Use a Variety of Teaching Strategies:

We have also found that learning occurs more effectively if it is presented in a variety of ways. This helps to meet the individual needs of children with different learning styles. For example, introduce a topic by naming several objects representing the topic, then play a guessing or matching game using the objects or pictures, and finally emphasize the topic by reading a story.

Culturally Sensitive Strategies

An important focus of our program is to incorporate the use of ASL and the teaching of Deaf culture in our curriculum. Following are some strategies that we have developed to provide culturally-sensitive instruction.

Sensitivity to Visual Learning:

When developing lessons, we must consider how learning a language visually influences the child's thinking processes. Processing a spoken language involves taking information in through our ears sequentially; each sound must reach our ear and then our brain one sound at a time. If we hear many sounds all at once we cannot make sense of them because they block each other out. The way in which we process visual information is quite different; with our eyes we can take in many items of information simultaneously. ASL makes extensive use of visual processing by "layering" linguistic information on each sign through modifications in movement and facial expression. We need to be aware that children who learn ASL first may not learn the order and sequence of English naturally.

Discourse Strategies:

Whenever possible, we try to use the culturally-appropriate discourse strategies. In ASL, a discourse strategy that is used is the "discourse diamond." When using this strategy, the topic is identified first (the point), expanded through examples and explanations, and concluded with a repetition of the topic. This discourse strategy differs from the normal process of providing information in spoken English, which proceeds from general to specific information.

Culturally-Appropriate Decision Making Process:

When decisions are made in the Deaf community, most often people will seek to find a consensus. Groups control decision-making; rarely are individuals allowed to make decisions for other people. We incorporate both the consensus model and the emphasis on collaborative group processes in the curriculum. For example, the children are asked for input in setting rules for behaviours.

Peer Teaching:

Peer teaching is also frequently used in the Deaf community. In the daycare, we try to use peer teaching as much as possible as children seem to learn more quickly from each other than from adults.

Community Involvement:

We use visitors from the Deaf community as much as possible and introduce culturally relevant topics in the curriculum. For example, if the children are learning about First Nations people, we would ask a Deaf First Nations person to come to the centre and explain her culture. Visitors from the Deaf community are positive role models for the children.

BILINGUAL STRATEGIES

Most of the teaching strategies have focussed on the visual needs of our Deaf children. A bilingual and bicultural centre faces special challenges because the centre has both Deaf and hearing children. We have developed several guidelines for teaching bilingual children.

1. The two languages, ASL and English, must be kept separate and distinct. As much as possible, we need to avoid mixing languages. Activities that begin with ASL need to be completed in the same language and vice versa.

2. We must recognize the different cultural behaviours and teach these differences when necessary. For example, if a child does not respond to repeated taps on her shoulder, it provides an opportunity for the staff member to explain, "When I tap you on the shoulder, it means that I want you to look at me because I want to tell you something." In a similar way, we

explain other cultural behaviour (ie. the meaning of light flashes) to children directly, if they have trouble understanding them.

3.   Use the appropriate visual and tactile attention bids (tapping, waving, flashing lights etc.)

4.   Teach the importance of eye contact and the linguistic uses of eye gaze.

5.   Use interpreters whenever possible for interactions between professionals, teachers, and children. The use of interpreters, both ASL/English and Deaf Interpreters, emphasizes the bilingual nature of the centre and the languages as separate and distinct.

6.   Encourage the children to use a language which is accessible to all without denying them their right to communicate in the language of their choice. If children are upset or frustrated, they will feel more comfortable expressing themselves in their first language. Respecting their first language may involve calling in a Deaf or hearing staff member to resolve the situation.

7.   Teach understanding and respect through role-play, reinforcement, and problem-solving.

LANGUAGE FACILITATION TECHNIQUES

In any interaction with children, it is important to encourage and develop the children's language skills at all times. The following are some suggested language facilitation techniques:

1.   Follow the child's lead. When a child starts a conversation, get down on her level. Talk about her interests and be expressive -- let your face and voice show that you are interested.

2.   Imitate what the child says. Imitating what the child says does several things: it shows that you are interested in what he is saying/signing; it gives you a chance to model correct use of language without telling the child that he is wrong; and it helps you and the child to learn to listen.

3.   Expand on what the child has said. Expansions should be just above the child's language level. If the child is using one-word sentences, your sentences should be only two or three words. Expansion also gives the child more information about the world around her.

4. Talk about what the child is doing and talk about what you are doing. This shows the child you are focussed on a shared activity, and talking about the same activities every day helps the child to learn language.

5. Label or name the objects and actions the child needs to know. You can help the child by helping her learn the words she needs to know. For example, if she is upset, give her the words to talk about her feelings.

6. Pause and allow the child time to respond to what you have said.

7. Give meaning to the child's speech/signs even if you are not exactly sure of what he meant. When a child has signed something that you might not have understood, tell him what you thought he meant.

8. Avoid using commands, directions, and yes/no questions. These types of sentences do not encourage the child to talk much. Instead of asking a yes/no question, you can give a child a choice: "Do you want milk or juice?"

9. Model the correct usage. When the child uses the wrong sign/word or forms the sign/word incorrectly, try not to correct her or point out her error, but model the right way for her.

10. Repeat! Repeat! Repeat!

Communication Guidelines:

Communication guidelines for a bilingual and bicultural centre can be difficult to develop. Not all guidelines will work in all situations; nevertheless, the following are guidelines developed for our centre.

1. **Do not speak and sign at the same time** Simultaneously speaking and signing can appear to save time, but it is at the expense of one (and usually both) of the languages. For example, to make a complete ASL sentence, the speaker/signer has to focus on linguistic features that make it impossible to form a coherent English sentence. There is lots of research that shows speaking and signing just does not work. It is better to stick with one language and repeat the message in the other language.

2. **Do not pretend to understand if you really do not.** Nodding your head has a specific meaning in ASL -- it means that you are understanding and following what the signer is communicating. If you do not understand, stop the signer and ask him/her to repeat. It is really important not to get into the habit of pretending to understand when you do not.

3. **When two people are signing, just walk between them.** The culturally appropriate thing to do when you approach two people signing and need to get past them is to just walk right between them. You do not have to wait. Nor do you have to sign "excuse me." In fact, walking between the two signers is the least disruptive thing you can do!

4. **Do not phone interpret.** If someone calls on the voice line and wants to talk with a Deaf staff person, ask him/her to phone back on the TTY line, using a relay service if necessary. Phone interpreting can sometimes lead to errors and miscommunication, and it is not the hearing staff person's responsibility.

5. **Do not interpret for parents.** Sometimes parents will ask staff members to interpret for them. We discourage staff people from interpreting -- it is not the hearing staff person's responsibility. We can provide information to parents, but we do not interpret for them.

6. **Resolving conflict is everyone's responsibility.** Sometimes hearing staff members will hear conflict between children or accidents before the Deaf staff see it. But hearing staff do not have to respond and try to resolve every situation in the centre -- they can alert the Deaf staff to the problem. Resolving conflict is everyone's responsibility and should be fairly distributed amongst the staff.

7. **Do not let hearing children swear at Deaf staff members.** Swearing has been an issue in our centre because the hearing children know that Deaf staff cannot monitor swearing in spoken English. Sometimes hearing children will use English "swear" or "hurting words" in front of Deaf staff members. Hearing and Deaf staff need to work together to deal with this situation.

8. **Let children use their first language in emotional situations.** Children need to be able to communicate in their first language in emotional situations. Hearing children are encouraged to use spoken English and Deaf children ASL when they are emotional. If it is inappropriate for the child to be speaking in front of other children, staff members are encouraged to take the child to another room (ie. the office).

9. **Spoken English is permitted when the group is all hearing children.** When you are working with a group of children who are all hearing, you can use spoken English to read stories, have discussions, sing, etc.

10. **Try to learn from each other's behaviours.** Different cultures have different ideas of what is "rude" or "inappropriate"; what is rude in one culture may be perfectly acceptable in another culture. If you are feeling conflict with another person, try to find out if the conflict involves cultural behaviours. Be ready to learn from each other instead of judging the behaviour of other's.

11. **Use consistent, culturally-appropriate attention bids.** It is tempting to call a child's name to get his/her attention and then communicate in ASL. But it can be confusing for children to be called in one language and then talked to in another language. For that reason, it is important to use appropriate attention bids. If you are planning to use spoken English with a child, then you can call out his/her name. If you are planning to use ASL with a child, then you should use an attention bid appropriate for Deaf people: waving, flashing a light, asking a child to get another child's attention for you.

12. **Make sure that people are included.** Sometimes hearing people will be speaking and a Deaf person will enter the visual field. In that situation, the hearing people will give the Deaf person a summary of what they have been talking about and then switch to using ASL if possible. The same situation applies to when hearing and Deaf staff members are using ASL and a hearing person who does not sign enters the conversation; the hearing staff will give a summary to the hearing person.

These communication guidelines do not cover all possible situations. Choice of language is a problem for hearing staff members that is not shared by the Deaf staff members. As well, hearing staff members do not usually share Deaf staff member's concern that spoken English will deter ASL development. Sometimes these differences create conflict. And our tendency is to create rules, like the ones above, to solve this conflict. The rules, however, only mask a deeper problem, which is a lack of trust among Deaf and hearing staff members. Our experience has shown, that once trust is established between Deaf and hearing staff members, the rules are not as important.

Developmental Stages

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

An important element of a bilingual and bicultural program is to make sure that the children's development is age-appropriate in both languages and cultures. Before entering your program, the children will have had different kinds of exposure to the two languages and cultures. Therefore, it is important for staff to have a basic understanding of the developmental sequence of the linguistic and cultural behaviours. This helps staff monitor the children's progress and gear their teaching to the appropriate level. Sometimes it may also help to develop specific goals for individual children or to decide if a referral for further assessment is necessary.

> *An important element of a bilingual and bicultural program is to make sure that the children's development is age-appropriate in both languages and cultures.*

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT:

There is not as much research on the acquisition of American Sign Language (ASL) as there is on the acquisition of English. Similarly, there is no validated measure or instrument to determine whether a child is using ASL at an age-appropriate level. STDP studied how Deaf and hearing children learned and used ASL. The following is a summary of our observations. The age ranges attached to each stage are merely guidelines and more research must be done to make sure if they are accurate.

Please refer to the list of definitions following the summary to clarify the meaning of grammatical terms used in this discussion.

Stage One   (Age 2 years)

Sign Formation:
The signs used by children at this stage of development are limited to a set of seven simple handshapes. These include, "B" ("MINE"), "C" ("BOWL"), "O" ("MORE"), "A" ("HELP"), "S" ("MILK"), "1" ("MOM"), "5" ("TREE"). Similarly, the movements of the hands are simple movements, such as straight forward, up, or down.

Sentence Structure:
Children at this stage express themselves primarily with single signs. They will start to combine two signs, or index (point) and add a sign and use some facial expressions with signs to elaborate and clarify their meaning.

Grammar:
Children start to use classifiers to show objects at this stage. The kind and variety of classifiers used is limited by the children's vocabulary and the handshapes they can produce. An example, would be showing a pole or stick by moving two "O" handshapes away from each other [(2h)CL: O - pole].

Negation, at this stage, is shown by shaking the head or by shaking the head and signing a negative word, such as "NO."

Children at this stage can distinguish yes/no and wh questions with facial grammar. They can appropriately make a yes/no question by raising their eyebrows while signing (usually a single sign). Wh questions are made with eyebrows down (frown) and question words "WHAT" and "WHERE."

Storytelling:
Storytelling and conversation is limited to talking about the here and now (the present things around them). Children will copy the actions and facial expressions of others, including the characters in a story.

Stage two   (Age 3 years)

Sign Formation:
The children at this stage are generally still using the seven simple handshapes. They will try to use signs that require more complex handshapes, but they will often simplify them (substitute simple handshapes). For example, they will sign "WATER" with a "5" handshape replacing the "W" handshape. Sign movements also remain simple at this stage.

Sentence Structure:
Sentence length increases during this stage to three of four signs/words (including indexing and facial grammar as separate signs). The sentences are simple in construction; subjects and objects joined by plain verbs, agreement verbs, or motion/location verbs.

Grammar:
Classifiers are now used to show not only objects but also the movement of those objects. For example, a "3" handshape moving forwards represents a car driving ahead (CL:3 - car driving forwards).

Children at this stage make modifications to verb signs to show the manner and temporal aspect of these actions. These alterations in verb meaning are made by changing the movement of the sign and/or adding facial expressions. In this way, the sign "WALK" is modified to indicate "WALK - quickly," "WALK - stroll," or "WALK - stagger," and so on.

The children continue to express negation as in Stage 1 (headshake alone or headshake with negative sign), but will also add a headshake to a non-negative sign or sentence to change the meaning to a negative one. For example, signing "ME WANT MILK" while shaking the head means "I don't want milk."

"WHY" and "WHO" questions are added to the children's use of wh question words. They use correct facial grammar for questions.

Storytelling:
At this stage, the children can talk about things, people, and events that are not present. They may, however, use real objects in the room to help them do this. For example, a child may use a chair to show how she fell off her bike.

The children may effectively express the content of an event or story. However, they do not always show who is speaking or doing the action through body shifing and eye gaze, which makes it difficult to understand them at times.

Stage three   (Age 4 years)

Sign Formation:
The children's fine motor skills have now developed to a point where the production of complex handshapes is more accurate. Complex handshapes include all remaining handshapes other than the seven simple handshapes indicated above, but some of the most frequently used are "3" ("BUG"), "V" ("SEE"), "Y" ("PLAY"), "L" ("LIBRARY), "X" ("APPLE"), "R" ("DOUGHNUT"). Sign production also includes complex movements, such as wiggling the fingers and twisting the wrists.

Sentence Structure:

The children at this stage continue primarily to use simple sentence types (sentences with plain verbs, agreement verbs, and motion/location verbs); however, complex sentence structures are beginning to emerge. These include topicalization, and rhetorical questions. Children at this stage do not always use the correct word order and facial grammar in the production of these sentence structures.

Grammar:

Verb modifications continue to show the manner and temporal aspect of the action but are expanded to also include the number and distribution of actions. Children will show whether one leaf fell, or two leaves fell, or many leaves fell randomly, by modifying the sign "FALL."

In a similar way to verb modification, children at this stage also begin to modify noun signs. Through sign movement and facial expression, they can modify nouns to show the intensity, size, shape, and quality of objects.

The list of wh question words used by the children expands to include "FOR-FOR," "HOW," and "WHICH."

Storytelling:

At this stage, the children are beginning to set up points in space to represent people and objects that are not present. This abstract referencing is not yet consistent, however and they may refer to points incorrectly or use real objects as substitutes for things that are not present.

The use of role play during conversation and storytelling is used frequently. Characters are more clearly identified, but skills to show a change in roles, such as body shifting, eye gaze, and facial expression, are still not used consistently.

Stage four   (Age 5 years +)

Sign Formation:

The children's use of complex handshapes and movements is now clear and consistent. This includes fingerspelling words and alternating movements between two hands.

Sentence Structure:

The use of complex sentence structures has expanded. Children can now use topicalizations marked with topic continuation (holding the topic with one hand and continuing to sign the comment with the other hand), relative clauses and conditional sentences. They use word order and facial grammar consistently to show these structures during conversation.

Grammar:

Verb modifications to show intensity, manner, temporal aspect, number and distribution continue

to occur as mentioned in the previous stage. Similarly, noun modifications to show the intensity, size, shape, and quality of objects are also present. In addition, children begin to use noun modifications to show the spatial arrangement of objects. For example, whether a group of three trees were standing in a row or clustered together would be distinguished by the signing of the noun "TREE++."

The full range of wh questions is now available for the children to use at this stage. This includes "WHEN," and "bracketing," starting and ending a question with the wh question word.

Storytelling:
Children at this stage can use full abstract referencing to talk about people and things that are not present. They continue to index present objects (real world referencing) or substitute present objects for non-present objects/people (semi-real world referencing) in the appropriate context.

The children can take on a variety of roles during conversation and storytelling. The shifts in roles, indicated through facial expression, body shifts, and eye gaze are shown clearly and consistently. The ability to take the perspective of each character is developing.

DEFINITION OF TERMS:

Handshape (marked and unmarked): All signs use handshapes. Seven handshapes, the unmarked handshapes, are considered to be easier to make and used more frequently in the production of signs. They are: "B"," C"," 0", "A", "1", "5", and "S." All other handshapes, the marked handshapes, (ie. "F", "X", "W") are considered more difficult to make and are not used as frequently in the production of signs.

Classifier: ASL has a group of signs called classifiers. They are signs which represent groups of nouns and their movement and location, or show the shape and size of nouns. For example, the handshape "1" can be used to represent a man, woman.

Plain Verb: Verbs that cannot and do not change when the subject or object of the sentence varies. For example, the sign "LIKE" does not change if the subject is singular or plural.

Agreement Verb: Verbs that change in formation and direction to agree with the subject and/or object of the sentence. For example "*me-GIVE-TO-you*" and "*you-GIVE-TO-me*" have different directions to agree with the subjects.

Motion/Location Verb: Sentences with classifiers (see above) which show the location or movement of objects and/or people. For example, a "3" handshape (representing a car) can move forward or back or swerving from side to side to indicate the movement of the car.

Yes/No Question: Questions that can be answered with a "yes" or "no" response.

Wh Question: Questions that include a wh word, such as who, what, where, why, how, which and when.

Topicalization (Topic-Comment Word Order): A sentence structure used when the topic of the sentence is signed first and emphasized with raised eyebrows, followed by a short pause, and then a comment is made about the topic. For example, "MY ROOM" (signed with raised eyebrows to indicate the topic) "ME PAINT TOMORROW" (comment).

Topic Continuation: Signing the topic of the sentence with one hand and holding it in space while the other hand signs the comment.

Rhetorical Question: This is a sentence that looks like a question but is answered by the signer. Rhetorical questions are made by putting a wh question between two clauses to connect them. The second clause answers the rhetorical question.

Conditional: Sentences that use the signs "IF" or "SUPPOSE".

Relative Clause: A sentence used to identify the specific person or thing that the signer wants to talk about. This sentence is made by brow raise, cheek and upper lip raise, and a backward tilt of the head. There is no pause in this type of sentence.

Indexing/Spatial Referencing: Setting up points in space to refer to people and things that are not present.

Bracketing: Beginning and ending a sentence with the same sign, i.e., the sentence begins with a sign that is repeated at the end of the sentence.

Verb Modification: Changing the verb's form to show a different meaning, ie. changing the direction of the verb to show subject or object.

Noun Modification: Changing the noun's form to show different meaning, ie. repeating the noun to show plural.

ENGLISH DEVELOPMENT:

There is lots of research on the acquisition of spoken English skills and many standardized tests for assessing children's skill in this area. There is less research, however, about the influence of ASL on children learning spoken English as a second language. STDP studied how hearing children of Deaf parents learn English. The following is a summary of what we observed.

Often people are concerned that hearing children of Deaf parents will develop speech problems from limited exposure to clear speech models; however, the number of speech problems in these children is similar to that of the general population. So having Deaf parents does not necessarily mean that a hearing child will have a speech problem. We did find that children in our centre who had voice problems tended to have hard of hearing parents. When children have hoarse, breathy voice qualities, they are said to have voice problems, which they develop from overusing

voice qualities, they are said to have voice problems, which they develop from overusing the vocal chords. It appears that these children habitually speak loudly when talking with their hard of hearing parents.

Most of the hearing children with Deaf parents attending Sign Talk Children's Centre were learning both languages (English and ASL) age appropriately. We noticed that some hearing children of Deaf parents had patterns in their English skills that show an influence from ASL grammar. At the lexical level, we found that children sometimes used words related in meaning but from a different grammatical category, for example, "froze" for "cold" or "nothing" for "no." More specifically, nouns are frequently replaced with verbs, for example, "sit" for "chair" or "sleep" for "bed." At the morphological level, auxiliary and copula verbs, and verb tense markers, are frequently omitted. For example, "Bear __ happy" (omitting the "is"), or "Boy jump __" (omitting the "-ed"). These concepts are shown through facial expression and sign movement in ASL. Children often make plurals by repeating the word, as they are marked in ASL. We also noticed these children do not use male and female pronouns (he/she/his/her); they generally refer to all persons as "he" or "his." We consider this to be influenced by their ASL use. ASL uses neutral pronouns and does not identify whether they are male or female. We also noted word order errors that reflect an influence from ASL. Adjectives follow rather than precede nouns, "Horse go barn red"; sentences are "bracketed" - beginning and ending with the same word, for example, "Maybe girl can eat it, maybe"; and verbs occur at the end of sentences, "You and me outside go." At the syntactic level, clauses are combined without using the appropriate syntactic markers. These children combine clauses by using pauses, pointing or facial expression to show the connection between the ideas.

Children who are learning English as a second language are different from children who have a general language delay. Children who have a primary language, like ASL, have grammatical structures but they are not following the rules of English. The structures are there, but the children just are not using them correctly. Therefore, helping these children can be very successful; they only need to learn the English rules so they can replace them with the rules they have been borrowing from ASL.

More Terms:

Phonology: the smallest part of a language. In English, this would be the sounds of the language. In ASL, it is the formational features of a sign (ie. movement or handshape.)

Morphology: the smallest part of a language that has meaning, usually one word or sign.

Lexicon: a language's vocabulary.

Syntax: a language's sentence structures. When talking about grammar, we are usually referring to this level of language.

Voice Disorder: abnormal voice quality, ie. breathy, hoarse, or nasal.

Language Disorder: language patterns are used that are not part of normal development.
Speech Problems: problem producing the sounds of the language.

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT:

STDP did not formally study the acquisition of cultural behaviours. We did, however, recognize patterns of cultural behaviour as they related to language use. We feel the following general guidelines can be helpful, but they need further research.

Children involved in a bilingual and bicultural program must become used to processing information visually.

Children involved in a bilingual and bicultural program must become used to processing information visually. Deaf children appear to perform the following behaviours naturally, or they learn them very quickly once they've seen them. It must be noted that we have measured cultural development through observable behaviours; a method of assessing the deeper issues of culture including values and world view still need to be developed.

Eye contact:	making sure that someone is watching before starting a conversation; maintaining eye contact with speaker/listener
Attention bids:	responding to taps, flashing lights or waves etc.
Use of attention bids	using attention bids to start a conversation (same as above).
Code switching	changing language to match either Deaf people or hearing people.

Behaviours which indicate a more advanced level of cultural awareness include:

- sensitivity to other people's visual access, such as sitting in a circle or moving to enable all people to see the signed message
- informing others of an announcement that was made in their absence or out of their visual field
- asking someone to tap another person because they are beyond your reach.

Language Development Checklist
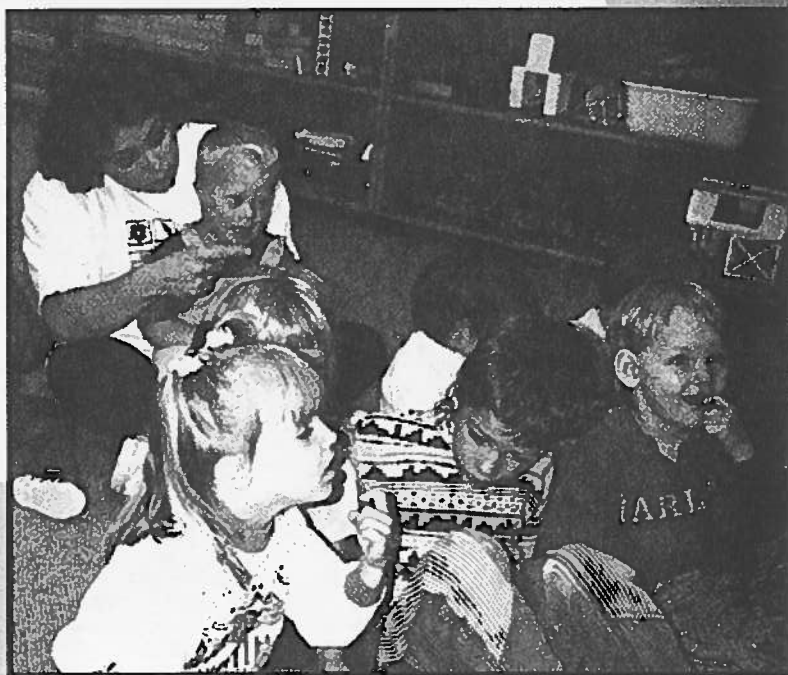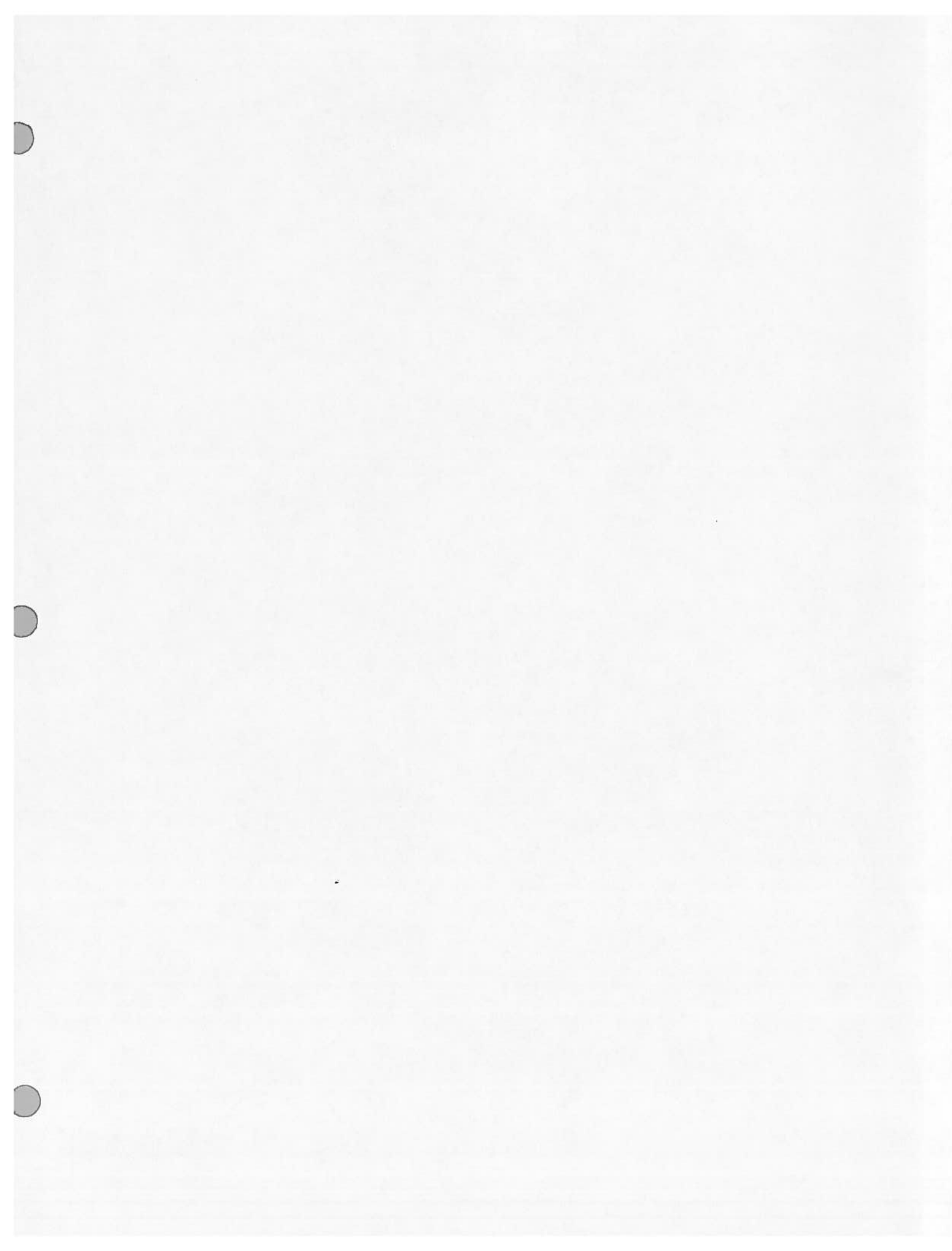
Language Development Checklist

The following Language Development Checklist can be used to provide a basic assessment of preschool children's language development in both ASL and English. We would, however, like to address the following cautions in the use of this tool:

Who can use the Language Development Checklist?

The ASL portion of the Checklist should be administered by a Deaf person, who has experience in teaching young children, has studied child development, and has a strong understanding of the linguistics of ASL. The English portion of the Checklist should be administered by a hearing person with experience teaching young children, has studied child development, and has a strong understanding of the linguistics of English.

How is the Language Development Checklist used?

The Checklist is used by videotaping the children interacting either in a group setting or one-to-one with peers, staff members, or parents. It is important to try to get a sample of the child's "best" language skills so choose activities that encourage the child to talk/sign a lot. For younger children (two and three years old) it will be necessary to use books or toys during the interaction. Children aged four and five years are often able to tell a story or an event, explain how to play a game, or re-tell a movie they saw. These tasks will elicit more advanced language skills than simply talking about what they are doing at the moment. In order to elicit a natural sample for each language, the child should be interacting with Deaf peers, staff members, or parents for the ASL sample, and with hearing people for the English sample. Each videotaped sample should be about 20 to 30 minutes in length to ensure that you have seen a variety of examples of the possible language structures the child is able to use.

When should the Language Development Checklist be used?

The Checklist should be used as an initial screening of a child's language skills. If you are concerned about a child's language development, or if you are simply curious to know where they are at, this Checklist can be administered. It does not provide a complete picture of the child's difficulties with language, rather it indicates whether a child is developing ASL and English within the normal range for their age. It is very important to refer children who do not fall into the appropriate age categories to a Language Specialist who is trained to provide further and more detailed assessment procedures.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

CHECKLIST

ASL Development

Stage I

- ❑ Begins to use simple handshapes
  eg: B, C, O, A, S, 1, 5
- ❑ Begins to use simple movements
  eg: straight forward, up, down
- ❑ Begins to use simple single-sign vocabulary
- ❑ Begins to combine signs into simple two-sign sentences
- ❑ CLASSIFIERS: Object
  eg: (2h)CL: O - pole
- ❑ Negation - Headshake alone or headshake with negative sign
  eg: <u>headshake</u>   <u>headshake</u>
        NO   CAN'T
- ❑ Questions used include YES/NO and WHAT, WHERE
  eg: <u>wh-q (frown)</u>   <u>yes/no - q (eyebrows raised)</u>
    WHERE   MINE
- ❑ Indexes (points to) present objects and people
- ❑ Storytelling is not always clear - copying actions and facial expressions

Stage 2

- ❑ Try to use complex handshapes, but often simplify (substitute simple handshapes)
  eg: WATER - with 5 handshape replacing the W handshape

- ❑ Uses simple movements
  eg: straight forward, up, down
- ❑ Use of Verb Modification
  eg: WALK - stroll; WALK - quickly; WALK - for a long time
- ❑ Three or four sign sentences
- ❑ CLASSIFIERS; Object + Movement
  eg: CL: 3 - car driving forward
- ❑ Negation - Headshake with non-negative sign
  eg: headshake
  ME WANT MILK
- ❑ Questions used include YES/NO and WHAT, WHERE, WHY
  eg: wh-q (frown)
  GO HOME WHY
- ❑ Storytelling (different roles, body shift, facial expression)
  - ❑ substitute present objects to talk about objects and people not present
  - ❑ character identification and shifts not always clear

Stage 3

- ❑ Begins to use complex handshapes
  eg: X, Y, T, R, 3
- ❑ Begins to use complex movements
  eg: wiggly movement
- ❑ Begins to use Verb Modification to indicate number and distribution
  eg: FALL - singular; FALL - plural; FALL - random
- ❑ Begins to use Noun Modification to indicate intensity, size, and quality of objects

eg: BOWL - big
- ❑ Questions used include YES/NO and WHAT, WHERE, WHY, FOR-FOR, WHO

Sentence structures:
- ❑ Begins to use Topicalization

ex: <u>topic (raise brow)</u>
     MY ROOM,   PAINT TOMORROW

- ❑ Begins to use Rhetorical questions

eg: <u>rh-? (raise brow)</u>
     TURTLE RUN, WHO WIN,   TURTLE

Storytelling:
- ❑ Inconsistent use of points in space to represent non-present objects/people
- ❑ Role-play through body shifts, eye gaze, and facial expression

Stage 4

- ❑ Consistent use of complex handshapes and movements
  eg: fingerspelling short words and names
- ❑ Use of Noun Modification to indicate the spatial arrangement of objects
  eg: TREE++ - in a row; TREE++ - in a cluster
- ❑ Use of bracketing to indicate WH questions
  eg: <u>wh-? (frown)</u>
    WHERE GO WHERE

Sentence structures:
- ❑ Topicalization (Topic Continuation)
- ❑ Rhetorical questions
- ❑ Conditionals (IF or SUPPOSE)
  eg: <u>cond.(brow raised)</u>
    IF-SUPPOSE RAIN,   GAME CANCEL
- ❑ Appropriate use of full abstract referencing for objects/people not present
- ❑ Storytelling (character identification, role play, role shifts) is clear and consistent

English Development

18 MONTHS:

Receptive Language
- ❑ Follows one-step directions without gestures, eg. "Give me the doll"
- ❑ Points to several basic body parts on self, eg. eyes, nose, ears, feet
- ❑ Understands simple questions
- ❑ Understands approximately 50 words

Expressive Language
- ❑ Uses five or more true words consistently
- ❑ Uses voice in conjunction with pointing and gesturing, eg. grunt, "ah", or word

TWO YEARS:

Receptive Language
- ❑ Points to body parts and clothing on others (person, toy, picture)
- ❑ Follows two-step directions, eg. "Get your coat on and sit down"
- ❑ Selects a requested item from a group of 5 familiar objects
- ❑ Understands negative "no", "not", "no more"

Expressive Language
- ❑ Begins combining words into simple two-word sentences
- ❑ Uses some questions ("what", "where")
- ❑ Has a vocabulary of 50 or more words
- ❑ Occasionally uses 3-word sentences
- ❑ Answers "yes/no" questions correctly, eg. "Is it cold outside?", "Do you want a cookie?"
- ❑ Begins using some pronouns ("it", "you", "my", "this", "that")
- ❑ Speech is frequently simplified and difficult to understand at times

THREE YEARS

Receptive Language
- ❑ Understands what common objects are used for, eg. "cup", "knife", "comb", "hammer"
- ❑ Understands size differences, eg. "big - small"
- ❑ Enjoys listening to simple stories for five minutes
- ❑ Understands prepositions ("in", "on", "under", "in front", "behind")
- ❑ Understands the contrast between "he" and "she"

Expressive Language
- ❑ Uses simple sentences (three to five words in length)
- ❑ Often uses pronouns correctly, eg. "I", "you", "he", "me"
- ❑ Uses negative forms, eg. "don't", "can't", "doesn't", "none"
- ❑ Uses some irregular past tense forms, eg. "went", "did", "was"
- ❑ Uses speech which is easily understood 80% of the time

FOUR YEARS

Receptive Language
- ❑ Understands opposites, eg. "up - down"; "black - white"; "fat - thin"
- ❑ Understands the difference between past and present tense in stories
- ❑ Shows understanding of future events

Expressive Language
- ❑ Begins using "-ing" forms of verbs, eg. "running", "walking", "looking"
- ❑ Uses regular past tense forms, eg. "jumped"
- ❑ Uses the question forms "who", "what", "when", "why", "how"
- ❑ Changes word order appropriately to ask questions, eg. "Can I ...", "Is it..."
- ❑ Expresses future events with "going to", "have to", "want to"

FIVE YEARS

Receptive Language

- ❏ Can follow three commands in the right order, eg. "Get the book, bring it to the table, and sit down"
- ❏ Understands the materials that objects are made of (wood, plastic, glass)
- ❏ Understands "how many" up to four
- ❏ Notices when stories or pictures don't make sense

Expressive Language

- ❏ Begins using complex verb forms, eg. "can go", "will eat"
- ❏ Can tell a story about pictures
- ❏ Gives a connected account of recent events and experiences
- ❏ Uses complex sentences (joining two sentences with "and", "because", "but", "if", "so")
- ❏ Uses clear speech

Organizational Considerations

ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

With Words And Signs

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DEAF COMMUNITY

Involving members of the Deaf community in a bilingual and bicultural program cannot be overemphasized. It is critical to have Deaf people included at all levels of the organizational structure as active Board members, administrators, staff, and volunteers.

Simply hiring Deaf staff does not ensure that the processes for decision-making and program development will reflect the cultural values of the Deaf community. It is essential to provide structured opportunities for input from community members. The Board of Directors can provide this, if at least half of the members are Deaf people. If a Board of Directors is not part of the organizational structure, you should establish an Advisory Committee to provide consultation regarding policy development and program planning. Again, at least half the members of this committee should be representatives of the Deaf community to ensure a balance of power and influence.

In the same way that modifications are

made to the preschool teaching program, modifications are also necessary at the administrative level. This includes sensitivity to visual learning processes, incorporating appropriate discourse strategies, following the concensus model for decision-making, and accounting for the additional time and cost involved with using interpreters during meetings. It will be necessary for each Board, committee, and staff team to discuss these modifications and determine which structures and processes work most effectively for them.

Informal interaction with the members of the Deaf community is also an important way to maintain their support. You can do this by inviting community members to your organization's Open House, Spring Tea, Graduation, Concerts/Performances, and so on. This will help them to understand your program better and see the work you are doing.

STAFFING

The greatest challenge for any bilingual and bicultural program involving Deaf and hearing people continues to be recruiting and maintaining staff persons who have appropriate qualifications. To balance the exposure and input to the two languages and cultures, it is necessary to have equal numbers of Deaf and hearing staff. When advertising for Deaf staff, do not limit yourself to traditional methods (ie. newspaper or Employment and Immigration Canada job boards) -- usually these are not the places where we find interested people. Instead, post advertisements in Deaf clubs, on the Disabled Information Service of Canada (an electronic mail system used by the national Deaf community), schools for the Deaf, and post-secondary institutions that have Deaf students. We have found American Sign Language courses a good place to recruit hearing staff.

It is essential to include both Deaf and hearing people on the interview panel when making a decision about hiring staff. Questions must not only assess a candidate's knowledge and experience with child development and teaching, but also their attitude toward working in a bilingual and bicultural centre. This includes questions about cultural awareness, experience working with and resolving conflict with hearing people (for Deaf candidates) or Deaf people (for hearing candidates).

Typically, when we advertise positions, we will receive applications from Deaf people who lack post-secondary education (teacher training, child care worker certification, etc.) or hearing people who lack knowledge of ASL and Deaf culture. Your staff can develop these skills through courses, workshops, or consultation. It is important to understand and accept that staff development and training is an ongoing process. It is important to have opportunities for staff to discuss communication issues at each staff meeting, and to plan retreats outside of the centre where staff can bond as a team. A major factor in staff training is the additional cost. It is important to budget not only for the cost of workshops or retreats, but also for paying substitutes if the training is occuring during work time, and paying interpreters if the training is not linguistically accessible. Another factor involved with staff training is the need for additional assessment and supervision of the staff being trained. This may be provided by the program director, or it may be necessary to contract with consultants with special skills in the area of bilingual and bicultural education.

PARENTS

A successful educational program needs a high level of parent involvement. This is particularly true of a program where parents, children, or staff may not share the same language and culture. The goal is to have all individuals involved become bilingual in ASL and English; to reach that goal, our program has needed to expand our vision to include providing information and education to parents.

Parents have different needs. In our centre, we find that the amount of information and/or education that parents need depend upon their backgrounds and experiences. Often we find that our Deaf parents lack accessible information, particularly in the area of parenting skills. Our hearing parents with Deaf children, on the other hand, have limited opportunities to learn ASL and

51
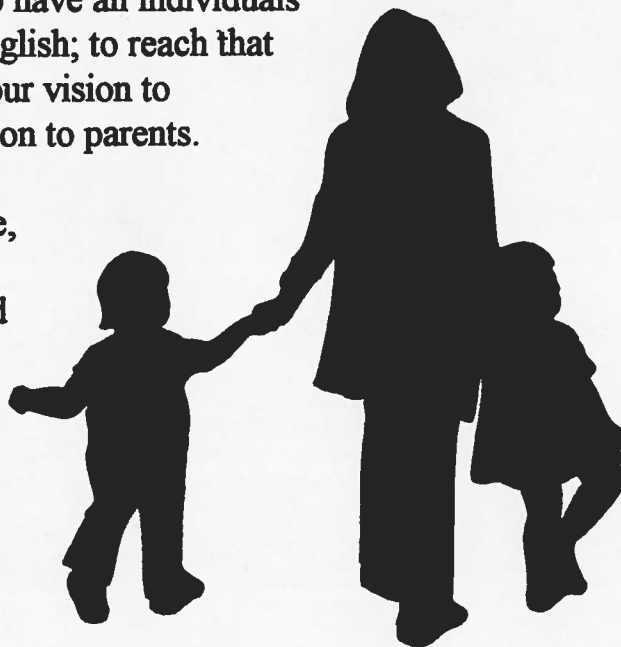
exposure to Deaf culture.

There is a community-wide lack of resources both available and accessible to Deaf persons on parenting. Although many workshops or courses are offered for parents in most communities, the linguistic barrier prevents Deaf parents from using these resources. Information that most people take for granted is simply not available to Deaf people. This includes basic access to media, books, and conversation, and services such as counselling, public information/education, and community resources. Deaf parents have also tended to miss the informal education passed down to us from our own parents and caregivers. Most Deaf children are born to hearing parents who frequently do not learn sign language. Not being able to talk with your parents means you miss out on their interaction with each other. For many Deaf parents, missing interaction with their parents resulted in missing exposure to parenting behaviours. This can create a situation where Deaf parents simply have not had exposure to the information, skills and experience related to parenting, and they do not have opportunities to learn this knowledge and information.

We have also found that some of our parents do not yet have the confidence to participate in a group and share their concerns openly. We feel that besides a parent education program an outreach component is also necessary. A program that visits the families in their homes and provides an opportunity to build trust with the family members can more effectively meet the needs of some parents.

Hearing parents with Deaf children also have unique needs that influence the relationship between parent and child. A bilingual and bicultural program offers these parents the opportunity to view their Deaf children as members of a linguistic and cultural group, rather than as disabled. These parents need support in accepting their children for whom they are and focusing on what they can do. They also need education about ASL skills and awareness of Deaf culture.

CONCLUSION:

Many people working in a bilingual and bicultural environment want a book that tells them exactly what to do in every situation and gives them all the answers, as if bilingual education was a "recipe" and all you needed was a "cookbook!" This resource guide cannot provide a simple "recipe" for bilingual and bicultural education. No book can. Bilingual and bicultural education is about people, and, although there are some common characteristics within a group of people, whether that group is Deaf or hearing, each person is an individual. Each individual brings to the program his or her own experiences, skills, and world view. These individual differences and similarities will influence the relationships and interactions that occur within the program.

We do not have all the answers, but we do have a list of questions to ask yourselves when you are stuck for what to do or when a conflict arises. These questions must be considered at every level of the program: when teaching the children, when working with the families, when managing the staff, when setting administrative policies, and when networking with the community:

Have both Deaf and hearing people had equal input?

Are all individuals being shown respect?

Are people content with who they are or acting to meet an unhealthy need?

Is the action/decision motivated by fear?

Can people change their judgements of others to a curiosity and desire

53

to learn more about them?

Is it safe for all involved to be honest?

Is each individual striving to become more bilingual and bicultural -- to learn more about themselves and others?

Have people tried to find what they have in common or only focussed on their differences?

Ask yourselves these questions often. Ask them- each step of the way. Add your own questions to this list. The process of evaluating and improving any bilingual and bicultural program is an ongoing one. There will be struggles in this complicated task of working within a bilingual and bicultural environment. However, the benefits are significant. Finding a new way of looking at the world not only broadens one's perspective, but also provides insight about one's own identity and values. Finding common ground within such diversity encourages new hope and growth.

Many opportunities are waiting -- we invite you to take them. Good luck on your journey of discovering with words and signs.

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