NERCh Strategies

Below are four of the most effective language facilitation strategies useful for children with language impairments, children who are learning more than one language, and children who are late talkers. Think of the word "nurture" and the acronym abbreviation "NERCh" as you learn and practice use of these strategies: **Narration, Expansions, Recasts,** and **Choices.** Some of these strategies may overlap or be used simultaneously. As you use these purposeful strategies, keep your verbal interactions naturalistic (not forced). With practice, you should notice these strategies will become a natural part of your interactional style.

NARRATION

Narrate or talk through and about the things you and your child are doing, seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling (keep the five senses in mind!). The goal here is modeling *ample vocabulary* (number of words and a variety of words used such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) and *correct language use* (appropriate word order and grammar such as pronoun use, verb usage, prepositional phrases, etc.). Live narration has been described as a verbal "play-by-play" description of what is going on around you.

In summary, narrate your parent-child interactions as much as possible (i.e. conversing, playing, reading, singing, drawing, cooking, feeding, dressing, bathing, bedtime routine, going out, shopping). It's easy to go through these daily activities without much verbal output, so **talk, talk, talk**!

EXPANSIONS

Expand on the words and/or the sentence structure of your child's utterances. The goal here is to affirm your child's utterance while expanding it to model *appropriate vocabulary*, *correct sentence structure*, and *complete sentences*. For example, if my child would say, "Cat eat," I would affirm the utterance while expanding it, "Yes, the cat is eating his food. It's yummy!" Or if my child would request something by stating one word with rising intonation to indicate a question, such as "Milk?", I would formulate the complete question while meeting that request: "Would you like to drink some milk?" or "Do you want milk?" You could also affirm: "Yes, you want milk. Mommy will give you milk."

RECASTS

The goal here is to recast or present your child's utterance (which was partially or completely incorrect or in the majority language for bilingual learners) **in a changed structure** (correctly or in the minority language) **while maintaining its meaning.** For example, if my child would speak a phrase or sentence partially or entirely with errors (or in the majority language), I would recast that utterance correctly (or in the minority language), modeling correct usage where any lexical and/or grammatical gaps or difficulties were noted.

CHOICES

Give your child choices when needed to simplify the demand of a response. The goal here is reducing the pressure of a correct response, especially if you know the vocabulary being used is not fully grasped by your child or is not a solid part of his/her everyday repertoire. For example, "Do you want a banana or an apple?" instead of an open-ended question, "What would you like to eat?"