

Module: **Communication and Emergent literacy:
Early Intervention Issues**

All Sessions

Glossary

Abstract symbolic communication Level of communicative competence at which children use few abstract symbols or one-word utterances to represent entities in the environment. Symbols are used primarily one at a time.

Acuity Visual ability to resolve fine detail.

Alphabetic knowledge Ability to name the letters of the alphabet based on their shapes. Also called “letter-name knowledge,” “knowledge of graphemes,” and “knowledge of letters.”

Anophthalmia Absence of the globe and ocular tissue from the orbit of one or both eyeballs (most individuals have some remnants of the globe). Sometimes associated with multiple congenital malformations.

Antecedent strategy Technique for developing echolalia into more advanced forms of language. Antecedent strategy involves modifying environments that are known to produce echolalia, simplifying language input, and providing relevant language as a model.

Assessment Formal or informal evaluation that provides information about the child’s developmental or functional status.

Assistive technology Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of children with disabilities. Assistive technology service refers to a service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.

Attachment Formation of significant and stable emotional connections with the important persons in a child’s life. The attachment process begins in early infancy as the child bonds with one or more primary caregivers.

Attentive stillness Act of staying motionless to better attend to a situation. Attentive stillness can be a form of subtle nonverbal communication.

Atypical development State-specified criterion for children whose quality of functioning is not the same as typically developing peers even though no delay is evident through testing.

Audiologist Professional trained to identify and evaluate deafness and hearing impairments as early in life as possible and to provide and direct the audiology services necessary for the successful use of hearing for learning, communication, and social development.

Auditory cue Stimulus that can be heard and that provides access to information about the environment.

Auditory system Sensory organs responsible for hearing; made up of the outer ear, middle ear, inner ear, brainstem, and brain.

Augmentative or alternative communication (AAC) Use of devices or techniques to facilitate children's expressive or receptive communication. AAC may include the use of unaided modes of communication such as body language, gestures, sign language, and facial expressions; or the use of high- or low-tech devices that require the child to use his or her body to activate a tool for communication.

Behavior regulation Function of communication that involves an action intended to guide or control another person's behavior for purposes of requesting or rejecting objects or actions.

Bilateral Having or affecting two sides.

Blindness Condition of lacking the sense of sight. Total blindness and legal blindness are different categories of blindness. Legal blindness includes many people with some degree of vision.

Braille System of embossed characters formed by a matrix of six dots consisting of two vertical columns of three dots each called a braille cell. Braille characters are formed by one or more dots and occupy a full cell.

Braille-print book Book that includes both braille and print.

Braillewriter Machine used for producing braille. A braillewriter has six basic keys, one for each dot in the braille cell. It also has space, line-advance, and back-space keys.

Central nervous system Main information-processing organs of the body, consisting of the brain and spinal cord. Nerve cells in the brain affect mental activity and consciousness; those in the spine affect organs and muscles.

Cerebral palsy Disorder of posture and movement resulting from brain damage.

Classification Creation and manipulation of categories of events and information. For children, classification is the ability to form conceptual groups and to recognize that members of a given conceptual group share some attributes but not others. Children also learn that various concepts are subordinate or superordinate to one another. For example, dogs are animals, but not all animals are dogs.

Clinical low vision specialist Trained professional who tests for visual acuity and visual field, introduces patients to near and distance viewing low-vision devices, and recommends adaptations to patients' home and work environments.

Closed circuit television (CCTV) Stand-mounted or handheld video camera that projects a magnified image onto a television monitor.

Coloboma Congenital malformation in which part of the eye—the choroid, iris, lens, optic nerve, or retina—does not form due to failure of fusion of the intraocular fissure (fetal tissue). A coloboma can occur as an isolated defect or it can be part of a multiple congenital malformation, such as the cat-eye syndrome, aniridia-Wilms tumor association, or trisomy 13. Associated with decreased visual acuity, nystagmus, strabismus, photophobia, and loss of visual fields.

Collaboration Style of family-centered practice in which all members of the team, including family members, work together in a supportive and cooperative manner to make decisions jointly.

Communication Meaningful exchange of ideas, thoughts, wants, or desires with others.

Communicative competence Range of abilities, skills, and knowledge necessary to engage in the meaningful exchanges of ideas, thoughts, wants, or desires with others.

Communicative context Situations and environments—usually the home, child care center, school, and community—within which communication and literacy develop. Communicative context includes linguistic and nonlinguistic interactions between children and adults. See Situational context, Sociocultural context.

Communicative exchange Interaction between individuals during which a message

is sent or received.

Communicative form Behavior that can be used to send or receive a message.

Communicative function Purpose served by the act of sending or receiving a message.

Compensatory skill Ability of children with visual impairments to use alternative strategies for learning.

Concept Abstract or generic idea generalized from particular instances.

Concrete symbolic communication Level of communicative competence at which children begin to pair concrete symbolic representations with specific referents in the environment, such as making the sounds of an object (e.g., “vroom, vroom” for “car”) and depictive gestures (i.e., gestures that look like what they mean, such as patting the seat of a chair to indicate “sit”). The symbols are termed concrete because they share features with their referent.

Consequential strategy Technique for developing echolalia into more advanced forms of language, in which the adult responds to the communicative intent while providing a simple model of appropriate language and providing positive reinforcement for appropriate language.

Conservation Understanding that certain objects, such as a quantity of liquid or weight, may stay the same even though it may appear different. For example, even though one glass is tall and narrow and another is short and wide, each contains 8 ounces of liquid.

Contingent responsivity Caregivers’ ability to perceive infants’ signals and needs and respond to them quickly and appropriately.

Conventional literacy Ability to write to convey meaning and read with comprehension. See Emergent literacy.

Conventional presymbolic communication Level of communicative competence at which children use conventional gestures (e.g., pointing, waving, kissing, nodding) to affect caregivers’ behavior. At this stage, children also begin to use intonated sound patterns to express needs.

Conventions of print Knowledge of standard text formats (e.g., that texts are read

from left to right and from top to bottom; that books are read from front to back; etc.).

Corneal ulcer Lesion on the cornea that is usually caused by an infection.

Cortical/cerebral visual impairment (CVI) Temporary or permanent visual impairment caused by a disturbance in the posterior visual pathways or the occipital lobe of the brain that results in the visual systems of the brain not consistently understanding or interpreting what the eyes see. Associated with fluctuating visual function, inattention to visual stimuli, light gazing, difficulty discriminating figure-ground, central or peripheral vision loss, scotomas, photophobia, and eccentric fixations.

Cruise To walk along furniture or walls using one or two hands against a surface for support.

Current level of functioning Statement, assessment scores, or report of a child's cognitive, communication, motor, social-emotional, physical, and adaptive skills on the Individualized Family Service Plan.

Decontextualized language Expression of ideas and concepts that are removed from the immediate situation or physical context.

Deictic gaze Fixed, direct eye gaze used to draw attention to an object, event, person, etc

Developmentally appropriate learning media assessment (DALMA) Systematic assessment of a young child's sensory responses, abilities, and preferences; used to guide the intervention team in making informed and deliberate decisions to facilitate learning.

Developmental delay Eligibility category for receiving early intervention services. IDEIA (2004) allows states to determine the criteria for developmental delay. Many states use a combination of percentage delay or standard-deviation delay in a number of developmental domains, such as 1.5 standard deviations below the mean in one area or 1 standard deviation below the mean in two areas. The areas considered are typically cognitive, motor, social-emotional, communication, and adaptive skills.

Dialogic reading Shared-reading technique in which the adult assumes the role of an active listener and the child learns to become a storyteller. In dialogic reading, the adult reader asks questions, adds information, and prompts the child to increase the sophistication of descriptions of material in the book. The child's responses are encouraged through praise and repetition.

Dual-media learner Child who learns to read and write in both print and braille.

Dynamic balance Ability to maintain body posture while the body is moving.

Early intervention According to Part C of IDEIA (2004): developmental services that are provided under public supervision; are provided at no cost except where federal or state law provides for a system of payments by families, including a schedule of sliding fees; are designed to meet the developmental needs of an infant or toddler with a disability, as identified by the individualized family service plan team, in any 1 or more of the following areas: physical development; cognitive development; communication development; social or emotional development; or adaptive development. Early intervention services must meet the standards of the state in which the services are provided and may include family training, counseling, and home visits; special instruction; speech-language pathology and audiology services, and sign language and cued language services; occupational therapy; physical therapy; psychological services; service coordination services; medical services only for diagnostic or evaluation purposes; early identification, screening, and assessment services; health services necessary to enable the infant or toddler to benefit from the other early intervention services; social work services; vision services; assistive technology devices and assistive technology services; and transportation and related costs that are necessary to enable an infant or toddler and the infant's or toddler's family to receive service. Early intervention services are provided by qualified personnel, including special educators; speech-language pathologists and audiologists; occupational therapists; physical therapists; psychologists; social workers; nurses; registered dietitians; family therapists; vision specialists, including ophthalmologists and optometrists; orientation and mobility specialists; and pediatricians and other physicians. To the maximum extent appropriate, early intervention services are provided in natural environments, including the home, and community settings in which children without disabilities participate; and are provided in conformity with an individualized family service plan.

Early interventionist Person who works with infants and young children with developmental delays or disabilities, or who are at risk of developmental problems, and their families. Though early interventionists may have different kinds of professional training, they all have work experience or special training in helping young children with disabilities and their families.

Eccentric fixation Compensatory process, such as turning the head, by which an individual establishes focus on an area of the retina other than the fovea.

Eccentric viewing See Eccentric fixation.

Echolalia Repetition of previously heard language.

Emergent literacy Developmental process that begins at birth in which children acquire the skills and knowledge that are the foundation for later reading and writing.

Key components of emergent literacy are oral language, including listening comprehension, vocabulary, and narrative knowledge; phonological awareness; concept development; knowledge of the conventions of print and print intentionality; alphabetic knowledge; and environmental factors. See Emergent reading, Emergent writing.

Emergent reading Behaviors that precede the mastery of reading, such as pretending to read and recognizing environmental print. (Before children can read, they can often recognize labels, signs, etc.) See Emergent literacy, Emergent writing.

Emergent writing Behaviors that precede the mastery of writing, such as scribbling (pretending to write); learning to write letters; spelling phonetically; and engaging in invented spelling. See Emergent literacy, Emergent reading.

Environmental print Written words, such as those on street signs, billboards, labels, and business signs, found in an individual's everyday surroundings.

Expressive communication Act of sending a message to someone else; ability to share ideas, thoughts, wants, and desires. See Receptive communication.

Extension Act of moving the two ends of a jointed body part away from each other, as in the straightening of an arm.

Facilitation Style of interaction that promotes meaningful communication through following the child's lead, encouraging a variety of child contributions, and responding with communications that are similar in length to those of the child.

Family centered Style of practice in which all activities, including assessments and interventions, focus on the families' strengths, priorities, and desired outcomes. Individuals and programs that are family centered recognize and honor diversity, and recognize that family members are the child's primary teachers, sources of nurturance, lifelong advocates, and key decision makers.

Fine motor Pertaining to small muscle movements, especially in the hands, used for manipulation of objects.

Finger dexterity Skill and ease in using the fingers.

Fixate To coordinate eye movements in order to focus an image on the fovea.

Flexion Act of moving the two ends of a jointed body part closer to each other, as in the bending of the arm.

Formal symbolic communication Level of communicative competence at which children begin to understand the semantic and syntactic rules of conventional language. At this stage, children may begin to combine two or more words to communicate and to change word order to change meaning.

Functionality Usefulness of an outcome. For very young children, functionality promotes engagement, independence, and social relationships in daily routines.

Functional illiteracy Inability to use reading, writing, and computational skills in daily life.

Functional outcome Desired goal on an individualized family service plan (IFSP) that is based on family priorities gained through the routines-based assessment and the results of assessments completed by professionals from at least two disciplines. For example, if independent play is a family priority, a functional outcome might be a 3-minute period in which the child interacts with a toy without adult involvement.

Functional task Activity that is meaningful to a child and family and that promotes children's engagement, independence, and social interactions.

Functional vision Degree of vision sufficient to perform some or all daily activities.

Functional vision assessment (FVA) Systematic observation and assessment of visual and sensory behaviors to determine how individuals use vision in different activities and environments.

General nominal Noun that refers to a class of objects.

Gestational age Age of a fetus as measured by time since fertilization of the egg.

Gestural mode Use of nonlinguistic movements of the body to send a message.

Gesture Movement of the body used to send a message.

Glaucoma Condition caused by excessive buildup of fluid inside the eye that puts pressure on the retina and causes damage to the retina and the optic nerve. Associated with fluctuating vision, peripheral field loss, poor night vision, photophobia, pain, and headaches.

Good fairy syndrome Misconception, shared by some infants and toddlers with visual impairments, that objects appear out of, and disappear into, nowhere. The good

fairy syndrome arises from the tendency of some adult caregivers to place objects into, and remove objects from, children's hands.

Grammar System of rules that govern a language. Grammar is made up of phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics.

Grapheme Smallest symbol that functions as a unit in a system of writing. Usually used in reference to letters of the alphabet, graphemes may also include numerals, diacriticals, punctuation marks, etc.

Graphemic awareness Ability to discriminate among the smallest units of print (i.e., the letters of the alphabet).

Gross motor Pertaining to large-muscle movements or skills, such as movements used to ambulate (roll, crawl, walk, and so on) from one place to another.

Gustatory system Sensory organs responsible for the five primary taste sensations: salty, sour, sweet, bitter, and umami (savory); made up of receptor cells in the tastebuds of the tongue; sensory neurons; and the brainstem. The gustatory system can play a role in arousal and alertness.

Hand-under-hand modeling Strategy in which an adult places his or her hand under the child's to facilitate a task.

Hyperextension Act of moving the two ends of a jointed body part away from each other beyond the normal limit.

Idiosyncratic behavior Manner of acting that is unique to an individual.

Incidental teaching Intervention strategy that uses naturally occurring communication and learning opportunities during daily routines and play to take advantage of children's interests and attentional focus. For example, the adult may wait for the child to initiate an interaction, then ask the child to elaborate by saying "Tell me more" or "What about ___?" The adult may further elaborate on the topic or may model how to elaborate for the child.

Individualized family service plan (IFSP) Written plan for providing early intervention services to a child eligible under IDEIA 2004, Part C, and the child's family.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA 2004)

Federal legislation that mandates a free and appropriate education for children with identified disabilities between 3 and 21 years of age and provides guidance for early intervention services for children ages birth to 3 years in Part C.

Intentional behaviors Level of communicative competence at which children engage in actions (e.g., waving the arms) that have purpose but are not consciously designed to communicate a message. Caregivers' interpretations of these behaviors and their responses to them result in communication.

Interactive function Appropriate function of echolalic language such as turn taking, declarative, yes response, request, verbal completion, providing information, protesting, calling, and directives.

Interactive matching Strategy in which caregivers adjust their interactive style to match the child's pace, engage in activities that are at the child's current level of functioning, and follow the child's lead.

Invented spelling Writing words following a more or less phonological, rather than orthographic, strategy. Also called "creative spelling."

Joint attention Communicative act in which a child and caregiver interactively attend to the same object, person, or activity.

Kinesic mode Use of nonlinguistic facial expressions to send a message.

Knowledge of graphemes See Alphabetic knowledge.

Language Any complex system of concepts represented by arbitrary symbols that are governed by rules; includes speaking and listening, and reading and writing.

Language play Experience with sounds in words, rhythms of speech, and word play such as rhyming words.

Lateral flexion Action in which the two ends of a jointed body part move closer to each other and farther from the middle or center of the body, as in tilting the head toward the shoulder.

Learning medium Sensory mode (e.g., sight, hearing, touch) used to acquire skills and knowledge. Individuals may use more than one learning medium.

Learning media assessment (LMA) Systematic assessment of an individual's sensory responses and preferences; used to guide the intervention team in making informed and deliberate decisions on the range of sensory preferences needed to facilitate learning.

Leber's congenital amaurosis Genetic visual disorder characterized by reduced retinal function at birth as documented by an electroretinogram. Visual function can vary widely; however, profound or total visual loss is common. Associated with decreased distance vision, sensitivity to glare, and distortion of visual field.

Legal blindness In the U.S., visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with corrective lenses (20/200 means the ability to recognize symbols for 20 feet on an eye chart that people with normal vision can identify at 200 feet) or visual field restricted to 20 degrees or less (tunnel vision) in the better eye.

Light perception Ability to distinguish between light and dark.

Linguistic awareness Ability to consciously observe or reflect upon language use. Linguistic awareness in children may be demonstrated by phonological awareness or by syntactic awareness. See Metalinguistic.

Linguistic communication Use of systemized language with conventional vocabulary and rules of grammar, syntax, and so on.

Listening comprehension Level of understanding of spoken communication, including vocabulary and syntax.

Literacy Ability to read, write, and otherwise communicate with or comprehend written language. Literacy takes a variety of forms and performs a variety of functions. Literacy develops from children's oral language and their early attempts at reading (usually based on pictures) and writing (at first, scribbling). See Emergent literacy.

Literacy event Activity or action that directly or indirectly involves reading or writing.

Literacy medium Form (e.g., print or braille) used to develop reading and writing. Children's literacy media are based on their sensory preferences and abilities as assessed in a learning media assessment or developmentally appropriate learning media assessment. Individuals may use more than one literacy medium.

Low vision Significant reduction of visual function that cannot be fully corrected by ordinary glasses, contact lenses, medical treatment, or surgery. Individuals with low vision have the potential to use vision for daily tasks.

Mand-model procedure Strategy that uses naturally occurring communication opportunities during daily routines and play. The adult asks the child a question that requires a response other than *yes* or *no* and waits expectantly for a response. When the child speaks, the adult expands slightly on the response and continues the interaction.

Manipulative Any physical object that can be handled, such as a wooden block, a bowl, or a coin.

Metalinguistic Pertaining to the study of language not just as a means of communication, but as something that can be conceived of in its own right. Metalinguistic thinking involves consciously observing or reflecting upon language use.

Microphthalmia Reduction in the size of one or both eyes as result of congenital malformation or disease. Associated with decreased visual acuity, photophobia, fluctuating visual abilities, cataracts, glaucoma, aniridia, and coloboma. Also called microphthalmos.

Milieu language teaching techniques A naturalistic strategy for promoting functional communication and language based on children's initiations. It includes incidental teaching, the mand-model technique, and time-delay procedures.

Morphology System of rules that govern, for a given language, the internal organization of words, especially as expressed in declensions, conjugations, word building, etc.

Motor development Process of acquiring large-muscle movement and control.

Muscle tone See Postural tone

Myopia Blurred distance vision that results from images being focused in front of the retina rather than on the retina due to an elongated eyeball; nearsightedness.

Narrative knowledge Set of expectations about the ways in which stories conventionally proceed. For example, through experience young children learn that stories often begin with "Once upon a time" and end with "The end." Also called "narrative schema" or "story schema."

Narrative structure Organization of a story.

Natural environment Setting in which children and families typically function and interact.

Natural learning opportunity The varied learning opportunities found within children's everyday experiences and events that can promote behavioral and developmental competencies.

Neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) Hospital that provides intensive care for premature and ill newborn babies.

Nonconventional presymbolic communication Level of communicative competence at which children purposely use nonconventional gestures (i.e., body motions that are not part of a shared set of rules) to affect observers' behavior. Laughing, nonspeech sounds, reaching, pushing, tugging, smiling, approaching, and moving away are nonconventional behaviors that may be used to communicate messages such as a request for more, rejection, protest, confirmation, and so on.

Nonlinguistic communication Form of receptive and expressive communication that does not involve language, such as facial expressions, gestures, and nonspeech vocalizations.

Nonverbal cue Wordless message by means of facial expression, gaze, gesture, posture, behavior, or tone of voice.

Nystagmus Rapid, rhythmic, involuntary movement of the eyes in horizontal, vertical, or mixed motion. Associated with reduced visual acuity, eye fatigue, and inability to maintain steady fixation.

Object concept Understanding that things continue to exist even when they are not providing sensory input. Also called "object permanence."

Object cue Everyday item or piece of everyday item associated with an activity or person that represents the activity or person.

Ocular mode Use of the eyes to send a message.

Olfactory system Sensory organs responsible for smell, consisting of the outer nose, nasal cavities, and central nervous system. Smell plays a role in arousal and emotional associations.

Optic nerve hypoplasia (ONH) Underdevelopment of the optic nerve during fetal development, sometimes appearing as a small, pale or gray nerve head surrounded by a light halo. Associated with central nervous system or endocrine disorders, field defects, and nystagmus.

Oral language Spoken communication.

Orientation and mobility specialist (OMS) Professional trained to promote goal-directed movement, exploration, and sensory organization that will facilitate development and independence of individuals with visual impairments.

Outcome Meaningful goal on an individualized family service plan (IFSP) that addresses a concern or priority of the family and the developmental needs of the child as identified in an assessment completed by professionals from at least two disciplines. To be effective, an outcome should specify measurable criteria for evaluation, a timeline for acquisition and review, and the persons responsible for implementing interventions to achieve the desired result.

Pelvis Lower part of the abdomen, located between the hip bones.

Perseveration Inappropriate repetition of a behavior, words, or language.

Phoneme Smallest unit of sound that can change the meaning of a spoken word.

Phoneme-grapheme correspondence Knowledge of the relationships between sounds and letters.

Phonemic awareness Ability to detect and manipulate the smallest units of sound within words.

Phonological awareness Ability to detect and manipulate the sound structures of oral language. Children's proficiency at identifying rhymes, deleting or adding syllables or phonemes from words, and counting the phonemes in a word may indicate phonological awareness. Also called "phonological sensitivity."

Phonological memory Ability to immediately recall sound-based information. Children's proficiency at recalling a series of numbers or nonwords may indicate phonological memory.

Phonological naming Ability to say aloud, as quickly as possible, an array of digits, letters, colors, or objects presented visually. Also called "rapid naming."

Phonological processing Brain activity that involves the ability to access the memory of the sounds of language and manipulate or discriminate among them.

Phonological sensitivity See Phonological awareness.

Phonology System of rules that govern, for a given language, the use of speech sounds.

Picture system System for expressive and receptive communication in the form of pictures.

Postural control State that involves movement and stability.

Postural tone Amount of tension in the muscles of the body.

Posture Position of the body.

Pragmatic awareness Monitoring of comprehension; the ability to know when one does not understand something.

Pragmatics System of rules that governs how a given language is used in different social contexts and environments.

Preintentional behaviors Level of communicative competence at which children engage in reflexive behaviors in response to their internal states (e.g., hunger, discomfort, exhaustion). Caregivers' interpretation of the behaviors and responses to them result in communication.

Prelinguistic communication Before the acquisition of language, the exchange of ideas, thoughts, wants, or desires through such means as facial expressions, gestures, or nonspeech vocalizations.

Prelinguistic milieu teaching An adapted version of milieu teaching that is used with children who are prelinguistic.

Premature Gestational age of less than 37 weeks.

Presymbolic communication Use of conventional or nonconventional gestures, as well as intonated nonspeech sound patterns, to express ideas, thoughts, wants, or desires. See Conventional presymbolic communication, Nonconventional presymbolic communication.

Primary early interventionist See Primary home visitor

Primary home visitor Point person for team members addressing multiple needs of the family and child. The primary home visitor is the regular contact for the family and supports the family in many ways, including implementing interventions suggested by other service providers. The primary home visitor may be an early childhood special educator, a speech-language pathologist, a TVI, or other professional. See early interventionist.

Print intentionality Knowledge of the functions of texts (e.g., that texts can tell stories, give directions, provide information, etc.). Also called “print knowledge.”

Print motivation Children’s relative interest in reading and writing activities.

Prone On one’s stomach; face down. See Supine.

Proprioception Awareness, arising from the muscles, tendons, and joints, of the position and movement of the body.

Proprioceptive system Set of receptors in the muscles, tendons, and joints that provide information about the orientation of the body in space and the positions of body parts relative to one another.

Proxemic mode Nonlinguistic use of space (e.g., by moving toward or away from an object or person) to send a message.

Rapid naming See Phonological naming.

Reading Act of interpreting a written message. Reading involves, but does not consist entirely of, translating graphemes (units of print) into phonemes (units of sound). See Emergent reading.

Receptive communication Act of understanding a message sent by another person; ability to comprehend that person’s ideas, thoughts, or desires. See Expressive communication.

Reliable alliance Dynamic relationship among family members and professionals that empowers individuals through joint decision making and through the sharing of knowledge, skills, and resources. Reliable alliances require that professionals know themselves; know families; honor diversity within the context of families, communities, and cultures; recognize and build on family and child strengths; affirm high expectations; communicate in a positive manner; and warrant trust and respect.

Responsivity Responding to another’s cues—including subtle, nonverbal, unconventional cues—quickly and appropriately.

Retina Inner sensory nerve layer that lines the posterior two-thirds of the eyeball and converts light into electrical impulses for interpretation in the brain.

Retinal detachment Separation of the retina from the choroid. Associated with central vision loss, blurred vision, scotomas, myopia, and possible loss of all vision.

Retinopathy of prematurity (ROP) Damage to the retina often associated with prolonged life-sustaining oxygen therapy of infants born prematurely; characterized by a discontinuation of normal retinal vessel growth and abnormal growth of new vessels. Associated with myopia, scarring and subsequent field loss, retinal detachment, glaucoma, and strabismus. Formerly known as retrolental fibroplasia.

Rhetorical question Question asked to make an assertion and not to elicit a reply.

Routine Everyday or frequently occurring event that serves to maintain family life. Routines may reflect cultural and personal values; may vary from day to day; may appear chaotic or rigid, organized or disorganized; and may reflect the family’s goals. Routines allow families to function.

Routines-based assessment (RBA) Assessment derived from the routines-based interview in which the family prioritizes its goals for the child and itself.

Scaffolding Specialized support by an adult to a child that provides information and assistance to link objects, actions, and categories to one another. Examples of scaffolding behavior include using questions, directives, or statements that associate objects and specific locations; relating an object, activity, or topic in which the child is engaged to a previous experience; associating feelings and emotions with a reason for the emotion; and linking objects with specific categories. Scaffolding is used to help children acquire new skills in a developmentally appropriate manner.

Schema (Plural “schemas” or “schemata.”) Meaningfully organized cognitive template or framework, typically derived from experience, that represents a person’s knowledge about objects, people, events, activities, or situations. Schemas help organize concepts so that they can be retrieved efficiently and assist in predicting what is likely to happen in a given context. For example, a young child might form a schema that equates four-legged creatures with dogs. After multiple experiences, the child’s schema would change to that of animals—including cats, cows, horses, and so on.

Seizure Sudden, involuntary change in behavior, muscle control, consciousness, or sensation due to temporary disruption in electrical activity of the brain.

Semantics System of rules that govern, for a given language, the meanings of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences.

Sensorimotor Pertaining to the coordination and integration of sensory perceptions and muscular movements.

Sensory information Input received by the sensory receptors.

Septo-optic dysplasia (SOD) Birth defect characterized by a malformed optic disk and nerve, pituitary deficiencies, and, often, the absence of the septum pellucidum, which separates the ventricles of the brain. Associated with visual impairment and inadequate growth hormones.

Service coordinator Case manager who enables families to access services and assures their rights and procedural safeguards. Service coordination may be this person's only role. In a blended service provider model, all of the professionals on the early intervention team may perform the functions of service coordination for their assigned families in addition to providing a specific early intervention service. In some instances, one of the service providers on the team coordinates services as well as provides specific early intervention service. This person may be referred to as the primary early interventionist or primary home visitor.

Sign language Communication expressed manually through hand shapes and movement.

Signing Communicative use of a formal set of signs, such as American Sign Language, or signs that are particular to an individual.

Situational context Physical characteristics of a child's living and learning environments, including the home, daycare center, and community within which communication and literacy develop. The situational context encompasses not only the communicative context but, more broadly, the availability of literacy and communication materials, opportunities for literacy and communication experiences, and the literacy and communication skills of adults and other children in the child's living and learning environments. See Communicative context, Sociocultural context.

Slate and stylus Device for writing braille by hand. The slate is a hinged metal or plastic frame inset with rows of rectangles representing braille cells. To create braille dots, the user inserts a sheet of paper in the frame and presses the stylus, a pointed steel punch, into the paper. Because braille characters are read from left to right, they must be written from right to left so that, when the paper is turned over, they will be oriented properly.

Social attachment relationship See Attachment.

Social development Process of acquiring the abilities, skills, and knowledge necessary to interact successfully with other people. Social development includes developing trust; engaging in socially appropriate interactions and behavior, learning to get along with others, forming friendships, and acquiring social play behaviors. Social relationships change as a person ages.

Social referencing Act of looking to others for clues about how to behave in a novel situation.

Social routine Repeated, predictable interaction between individuals that provides consistency for communicative exchange.

Social skill Behavior that allows young children to interact and communicate successfully with others. Social skills can be considered components of nonlinguistic and linguistic communicative attempts and can be expressive or receptive.

Social smile Pleased facial expression in response to an interaction.

Sociocultural context Situations and environments that convey societal and cultural values, expectations, and beliefs and that provide resources and opportunities that facilitate and promote communication and literacy development. See Communicative context, Situational context.

Specific nominal Noun that refers to one object.

Speech-language pathologist (SLP) Professional trained and licensed to facilitate children's communication in the context of social interactions with peers and family members in homes, schools, and communities.

Speech-language pathology Study of communication problems in infants, toddlers, children, and adults. Speech-language pathology may include identification of children with communicative or oropharyngeal disorders and delays in development of communication skills, including the diagnosis and appraisal of specific disorders and delays in those skills; referral for medical or other professional services necessary for the habilitation or rehabilitation of children with communicative or oropharyngeal disorders and delays in development of communication skills; provision of services for the habilitation or rehabilitation; and prevention of communicative or oropharyngeal disorders and delays in development of communication skills.

Static balance Ability to maintain a desired body posture.

Storybook preview Shared exploration of the content of a book without consideration of the storyline.

Storytelling Act of reciting tales or relaying anecdotes.

Supine On one's back; face up. See Prone.

Support Act of providing for or maintaining necessities for daily life. For families of children with disabilities, support can be provided by informal resources such as neighbors or grandparents or by formal resources such as early intervention. Early interventionists provide three types of support—emotional, material, and informational.

Symbolic communication Use of arbitrary but agreed-upon sounds or signs for the exchange of ideas, thoughts, wants, or desires. See Abstract symbolic communication, Concrete symbolic communication, Formal symbolic communication.

Symmetrical Having equal size, shape, alignment.

Syntactic awareness Knowledge of the rules that govern how words are arranged to make meaningful sentences.

Syntax System of rules that govern, for a given language, how words are arranged to make meaningful sentences.

Tactile cue Touch stimulus that provides access to information about the environment.

Tactile illustration Raised-line picture designed to be perceived through the sense of touch.

Tactile selectivity Aversion or sensitivity to information acquired through the sense of touch.

Tactile sensitivity See Tactile selectivity.

Tactile signing Communication method based on a standard manual sign system in which the receiver's hand is placed lightly upon the hand of the signer to perceive the signs. Useful especially for children who are deaf and who have insufficient vision to access signs visually.

Tactile symbol Object with distinctive qualities that can be perceived through the sense of touch and that represents an idea, place, event, location, or person. For example, a cloth duck attached to the cover of a book about ducks may serve as a tactile symbol to identify the book.

Tactile system Sense organs comprised of receptors in the skin and the central nervous system. Receptors transmit information about light touch, pressure touch, heat, cold, and pain to the central nervous system. The tactile system provides information for both protection and discrimination.

Tactile-kinesthetic mode Use of nonlinguistic touch and movement to send a message.

Tangible communication system Procedure that uses object cues for expressive and receptive communication.

Teacher of children with visual impairments (TVI) Individual who has received training in the education of children and young adults with visual impairments.

Touch cue Act of communicating a message through direct contact with an individual's body.

Trunk Main section of the body containing vital organs.

Vestibular system Sensory organs, comprised of structures of the inner ear, one of the cranial nerves, and those parts of the brain that interpret and respond to information derived from these structures, that contribute to balance, posture, oculomotor control, and motor coordination.

Vision Ability to perceive and discriminate among objects by means of sight. Vision involves fixation and eye motility, accommodation, convergence, visual perception, and visual-motor integration.

Visual acuity Ability to identify and resolve fine details.

Visual field Extent of area seen by the eye as it fixates straight ahead; measured in degrees away from fixation.

Visual field loss Inability to see part of an area of view when looking straight ahead.

Visual impairment Abnormality of the visual system that affects daily living activities. Typically, eligibility for services is based on visual acuity of 20/70 or worse in the better eye with correction or visual field loss of 80% or more.

Visual system Sensory organs responsible for sight, consisting of the eye, retina, optic nerve, optic chiasm, and areas in the brain that interpret visual images.

Vocal mode Use of nonlinguistic vocalizations to send a message.

Vocalization Production and utterance of vocal sounds.

Writing Act of imprinting symbols on a surface to represent the sounds or words of a language. Writing involves, but does not consist entirely of, translating phonemes (units of sound) into graphemes (units of print). See Emergent writing.

XY tray Light-absorbing platform on which a document or book is placed for viewing by closed-circuit television.