THE FIRST WORDS

COMPILED BY : Ricki Block , MS, CCC-SLP

Children who first learn language talk about what they know. This includes what they are doing, what other people are doing, etc. They are mainly interested in what happens in their immediate environment, the "here and now", rather than what happened 5 minutes ago. They talk about what is going on in their own little world around them. Children begin to learn the code for representing what they know in order to understand and produce 1-word utterances. These ideas tell you what the child has learned about the world – that people, objects and events exist, disappear, and come back again and that the child chooses what he/she wants to talk about. Children talk about objects that move and ones in which they can act upon. How a child plays with an object is seen as an index of what he/she understands about the relations between objects.

The following categories are the ones in which children use at an early age. **Circle the words that your child uses** and add any words not listed. This check sheet will help both of us decide which areas we need to work on with your child. Included are specific activities for each category.

1. **EXISTENCE** – the child points out objects or people in environment
   a. **associated words – here, there, this, that, a**
   b. asks the questions, "What's that?"
   c. names things – circle the words on the vocabulary list
   d. have the child identify objects taken from a box or bag
   e. ask your child to find certain objects around the house – name
      items around the house all the time

2. **NON-EXISTENCE** – after the child identifies an object, it disappears
   a. **associated words – no more, all gone, no, not**
   b. put an object in your hand and hide it behind your back. Then tell
      the child that the item is "all gone." Can your child find it?
   c. when your child finishes eating or drinking something, show
      him/her that the food is all gone

3. **REJECTION**
   a. **associated words – no, don't**
   b. you shouldn't have any trouble with this one

4. **RECURRENCE –** when a child wants to see something happen again
   a. **associated words – more, again, another**
   b. eating time – more milk, another cookie
   c. bath time – more bubbles, splash again
   d. toy time – more baby, push again

5. **ACTION –** the movement of a person or an object
   a. eating time – eat, drink, open, pour, cut, wash, dry, clean, wipe, spill, help
   b. playground – slide, run, jump, swing, throw, hop, ride, climb catch, kick, sit, walk, bounce
   c. bath time – wash, pour, spill, splash, dry, swim
   d. cook – mix, bake, stir, pour, cut, make
   e. art – cut, draw, color, paint, paste, tear, fold, I do it
   f. playdough – squeeze, push, pull, pat, roll, stretch
   g. other words – blow, break, brush, call, clap, close, cough, cry, dance, drive, drop, fly, go, hug, kiss, read, sleep, sneeze, stand, stop, work

6. **LOCATION** – locating people & objects
   a. **associated words – put, take, get, go, here, there, in, out, on, off under, up, down, away, gimme**
   b. asks questions, Where go or Where object or person
   c. clean up time – put in, away, on, here, there, up
   d. getting dressed – put on, take off, let child take off shoes & socks
   e. blocks – fall down, take off, put on, take out, put in

LATER CATEGORIES
7. **ATTRIBUTION** – any word that describes an object or person
   a. **associated words** – big, soft, heavy, hard, hot, little, wet, dry, short, fat, dirty, clean, cold, happy, sad, hungry, colors, numbers, shape, full, empty

8. **POSSESSION** – the child has something that he/she wants or it's someone elses
   a. **associated words** – my, mine, mommy's , daddy's – initially /s/ is absent
   b. touch a part of the child's body and say for ex, "Whose nose is this?"

9. **STATE**
   a. **associated words –** want, need, like, have
   b. when you know your child wants something, ask…"What do you want?"
   c. body parts can be used to teach "I have eyes, nose, etc."

10. **NOTICE** – attention to a person object or event
    a. **associated words** – hi, bye, watch, look, see, hear
    b. any of these words can be used when you want to make him/her aware of objects & sounds around, ex. "I see a ___", "Look"