



Welcome to.....

# Internationally Adopted Children's Language Learning: Academics, Issues and Resources

**“A Dialogue for Increased Understanding & Awareness”**

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ESOL Teacher

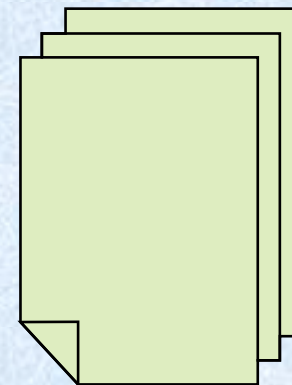
# Why are we here??

- Gaps & Disconnect in understanding how these students learn
- Realize the potential for language difficulties
- Explore services & resources for these students.

# Renewed Conversation...

- Review what typical language learning can look like
- How adoptees are different than typical language learners & its implications
- Ideas of how to help & resources
- Open up to questions/discussion

????????????





# Typical characteristics of learning a new language...

- **Silent period-** speaking a few words or none at all, can last for days to months
- **Codeswitching-** using words in both languages
- **Apply syntax or sentence structure of 1<sup>st</sup> language to second.**
- **Pronunciation-** not all languages have the same sounds
- **Second language acquisition follows a similar progression as learning a first language-** see language chart

For more info on communication skills for ages 0-5yrs  
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

<http://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/chart.htm>

# Language Development Chart

**Typical Language Development--See your copy!**

**This can help with watching your child develop new language OR get a sense of how developed 1<sup>st</sup> language is....please note this chart focuses on what is cognitive appropriate for children ages, older children usually follow this sequence more quickly**

**6months- respond to name**

**12 months- uses word or words with meaning  
understand simple instructions**

**18months- has vocabulary of 5-20 words  
vocab is mostly nouns..ie car, house, dog...etc.  
follow simple commands**

**24months- combine words to make a short 2 words sentence,  
2/3 should be intelligible**

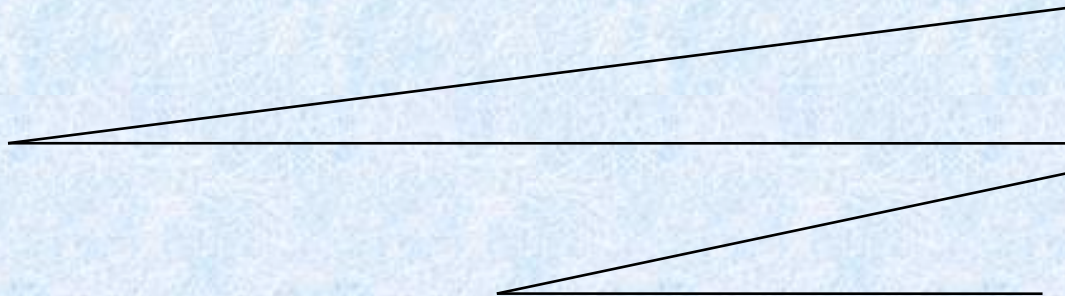
**36months-Use pronouns I, you, me correctly  
using some plurals and past tense  
knows chief parts of body, able to indicate these if not my name  
handles three word sentences easily  
about 90% of what child says should be intelligible  
understands simple questions dealing with environment & activities**

*See hand out from asha website previous slide*

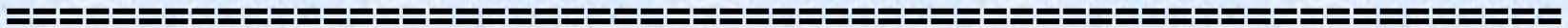
# What makes our kids different when it comes to language?

- **Bilingual vs. Monolingual & its implications**
  - Taking a language away and adding a new one
  - Not having enough language can interfere with meta-speak or 'mental talk'
  - Also can interfere with language transfer
- **Statistically, higher probability to have initial delay in their first language**
  - due to lack of prenatal care, possible neglect, poor nutrition, low social interaction, etc.
  - less than adequate living situations at the start of life

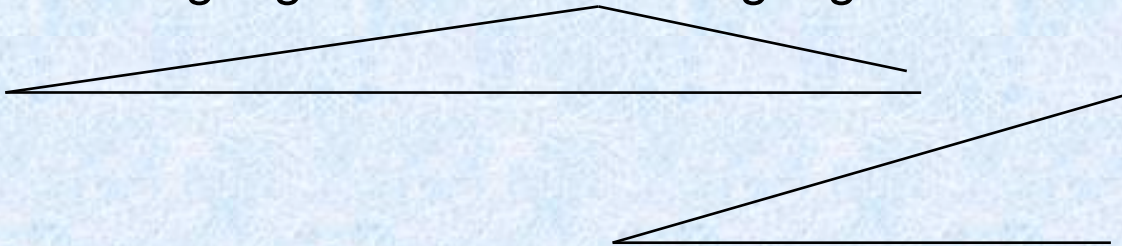
Monolingual      Language Addition = Bilingual  
1st language                      2nd language



**+ Chinese/Russian/Spanish/etc + English**



Monolingual      Similingual/Language Subtraction      Monolingual  
1st language                      2nd language



**-- Chinese/Russian/Spanish/etc + English**

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# Social vs. Academic Language

They know English.

They don't need any English help...

Social & daily communication is different from school/academic language....

# So what to do?? Don't panic!!

## A. C. E. – Plan for Success

**Assess-** collect data on developmental growth  
cognitive, physical & academic

**Collaborate-** share data/info with others;

parents, class teachers, doctors, social worker, speech therapist,  
psychologist, reading coach, ESL specialist, school counselor,  
principal, etc...

**Exposure-** to quality learning experiences

at school & home thru reading books, field trips, questions/  
explanations, building relationships, etc

**THE FUN PART!!**

# **Use the 5 Finger Rule to determine if a book is "just right" for you!!**

**1. Open a book to any page.**

**2. Start reading the page.**

**3. Hold up one finger for EVERY word that you don't know or have trouble pronouncing.**

**0-1 Fingers- The book is too EASY**

**2-3 Fingers- The book is at the Interest level.**

**4 Fingers- The book is at the Challenge level.**

**You can try it ~ be sure it makes sense.**

**5 Fingers- The book is at the Frustration level & not  
a good choice for now**

# Where to start?? Resources!!!

1. Contact your doctor &/or other professionals- there are few Adoptee Medical Clinics in town that are very good and devoted to this special group of children!!
2. Check with your adoption agency. They can provide access to both free and fee based resources & specialists; social workers, various therapists, special education advocates, etc.
3. For children ages 0-5, Parents As Teachers (PAT) offers developmental screenings at no cost. (314) 993-6522†
4. For school aged children, talk to your school about eligibility into reading programs, ESL services, tutoring, etc.  
as well as...
5. speech or other available screenings they provide for free.

**The key is to collect data & use a team approach!!**



# Resource to share w/ class teacher

Informative, short & easy to understand resource guide for class room teachers, includes language acquisition chart, essential tips, definitions & suggestions of how to support students learning.

- [http://www.pps.k12.or.us/curriculum/PDFs/ESL\\_Modifications.pdf](http://www.pps.k12.or.us/curriculum/PDFs/ESL_Modifications.pdf)

"ESL/Bilingual Resource Guide for Mainstream Teachers"

# Notable web resource for parents...

Towson University has lots of helpful & easy to understand info on language development in international adopted children such as how orphanages care affects language in infants to language in older adopted children

- <http://pages.towson.edu>

# Web resources for parents & educators

Dr. Boris Gindis is a child psychologist specializing in psycho-educational issues of older internationally adopted children.

He has many academic, yet easy to understand articles online. You can find more by searching “Dr. Gindis International adoption”

A couple are...

- <http://www.adoptionarticlesdirectory.com/Article/Internationally-adopted-post-institutionalized-students-in-an-ESL-class/261> - how these kids are different & ESL services
- <http://www.adoptionarticlesdirectory.com/Category/Language-Issues/77> - access to a few articles, including “What should adoptive parents know about their children’s language-based school difficulties”

# More resources.....

- Hand outs available on the table..

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What NOT to do???



Do NOT take the  
“Wait & See Approach!”

- IF you have further questions in the future  
contact **Gelene Strecker-Sayer**  
at [gelene@eslanswers.com](mailto:gelene@eslanswers.com)

**THANK YOU!!** 😊

**QUESTIONS???**