

preschool settings. Gradually throughout the school year and in consideration of children's developmental needs, the learning activities may become more formal, involving direct instruction and paper-and-pencil activities. With this transition in mind, the learning activities described here include both informal and exploratory activities as well as teacher-guided learning activities. Teachers can enhance children's language development during the kindergarten year by providing a curriculum that is rich in opportunities for using and exploring language in both types of learning activities.

Language-Related Curricular Goals

Curricular goals provide direction to teachers in selecting and implementing learning activities that are appropriate for children's levels of development. The following specific goals for enhancing language development in kindergarten incorporate the five aspects of language knowledge and both oral and written language modes (Otto, 1991). In addition, these goals can be used to provide a wide variety of learning activities that incorporate independent, exploratory experiences as well as teacher-directed activities:

1. *Increase children's ability to communicate orally in instructional and conversational settings.* This goal addresses the overall language competencies of children and places a special emphasis on pragmatic knowledge of how language is used to communicate orally during instruction and in conversation.
2. *Encourage an awareness of the purposes of reading and writing.* Children are encouraged to become aware that reading and writing may have different purposes, such as reading for information, for enjoyment, for problem solving, and for interpersonal communication. This involves pragmatic knowledge of how language is used differently in different settings.
3. *Increase vocabulary through conceptual development.* Direct, hands-on experiences are important in the development of conceptual knowledge. Conceptual knowledge is needed as a basis for vocabulary development; or semantic knowledge. Through concrete learning experiences inside and outside the classroom, children's conceptual knowledge and vocabulary develop.
4. *Increase listening comprehension.* When children develop higher levels of listening comprehension, they are also developing their semantic, syntactic, and morphemic knowledge. Phonetic knowledge is also increased as they hear new words pronounced. Pragmatic knowledge is enhanced as they become familiar with different genres.
5. *Increase children's awareness of the process of communicating by using written language.* Initially this goal is furthered by experiences that increase children's awareness of sound patterns and rhyme in spoken language. Poetry and rhyming story texts can be shared with kindergarten