



## ORAL LANGUAGE EMPHASIS

The *Bridges* program is a supplemental language learning tool for students who are acquiring a new language. It is a research-based program that supports optimal conditions for second language acquisition and is oriented around oral language development, namely vocabulary knowledge. Oral language skills include being able to communicate with someone using words to understand, ask or express a thought, idea or feeling. It is a vehicle for thinking and learning and is a predictor of school success.

Babble Tree's language learning tool is organized by themes, or language topics called "Units." It is not necessary for programs to follow the units in sequence, but rather programs can pick units or language topics to use in ways that work best for them. *Bridges* is designed to enhance children's early language development and can be adapted to support any developmentally appropriate curriculum (Creative Curriculum, High Scope, etc.) because it is not linked to any one approach.

In the *Bridges* program, learning is anchored in activities that are geared to help children feel at ease and feel confident in their ability to understand, practice and use new language skills in meaningful ways. As language learning grows, this makes for a pleasurable and memorable learning experience for teachers, students and families.

*Our vision is for children to acquire a new language in an enjoyable and high-quality manner to advance positive learning attitudes, skills and behaviors in a nurturing environment.*



**LISTENING**

*Babies learn through their senses. To help them communicate, they need practice listening to people talking with them.*



**READING**

*Generally after children have a vocabulary of about 2,000 words (4-5 years), they start to learn to read. Vocabulary and oral language are needed to understand it.*



**SPEAKING**

*Babies make cooing sounds like, ahhh around 3 months. Then they start to babble, and usually around one year children have some of their first words.*



**WRITING**

*Early writing begins when a child starts to use a pencil, crayon or marker to make symbols and letters to represent sounds, words and ideas.*

**EARLY LEARNING AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

Among the many ways in which to support a child’s wellness, modeling language has proven to have a profound impact upon how well a child does in school. Research shows that the more words children hear from their parents and caregivers before the age of 3, the higher their IQ and the better they perform in school.

A simple and powerful recommendation that will impact a child’s school success is to **TALK** with the child. Consider talking about everyday occurrences like the weather or changing season or pointing out the names of objects. Or consider discussing feelings, needs, ideas or asking questions.

To help you understand what children practice in school, we want to share with you ways the *Bridges* language learning approach supports children’s oral language and vocabulary knowledge at school and at home.

The Bridges program respects the natural approach of language acquisition. Children develop listening skills before they learn to talk. Games and activities such as Simon Says, Follow the Leader and I Spy, singing songs with movements, listening to stories and pointing to pictures, or doing finger plays and playing games with toys and objects help children acquire language naturally. To show understanding, students move and follow directions using their bodies. They use movements such as pointing or nodding to show what they understand. Children begin speaking naturally, starting with simple words and familiar phrases. With practice, and as their oral language develops, they are able to begin to use pictures and symbols to represent their thoughts and words. The focus is on learning *to understand and be understood*.

**VOCABULARY THEMES**

Language topics in this approach are taught and explored through mini-lessons of approximately 20-30 minutes. Here are examples of what they are learning to do in their new language.

<p>Unit 1: School, Commands, Body, Shapes, Colors, Numbers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following directions such as:                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"Please pick up the crayons."</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>Pointing to objects and saying their names such as: <i>"What do we have here?" "What is it?"</i></li> <li>Learning to see shapes and colors, and learning to count.                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"Let's count them, ready?"</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Unit 2: Food &amp; Nutrition, Table Etiquette and Healthy Habits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following directions such as:                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"Please pass me a fork."</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>Pointing to objects and saying their names such as: <i>"Where is your spoon?" Or, "Is this a fruit, a drink, meat, or lunch?"</i></li> <li>Learning healthy choices like,                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"Which one is healthier?"</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Unit 3: Domestic and Wild Animals, Insects and Sounds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following directions such as:                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"Please go get the turtle toy."</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>Pointing to objects and saying their names such as: <i>"What is this animal?" Or, "Who says...?"</i></li> <li>Listening to and telling stories                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"Let's sing Old MacDonald," or read "The Three Little Pigs."</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Unit 4: Vehicles, Transportation, Signs, Occupations and Places</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following directions such as:                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"Please pick up the truck."</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>Pointing to objects and saying their names such as: <i>"Who has the train?" Or, "Is this a car?"</i></li> <li>Learning about community places, people and things like:                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"Where did we go?" "Who did we see?" "What did they do?"</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**UNIT 1 OVERVIEW AND VOCABULARY TOPICS**

In Unit 1, children learn how to listen and to follow classroom directions in the new language. They identify and match oral language of classroom objects, colors, shapes, body parts and prepositions listening to directions and responding physically to develop understanding. Students play games and participate in songs, chants, finger plays, stories, crafts and art activities to help acquire the language.

Most children will show their understanding through movements, and by the end of the unit most use simple one-word responses. All the lessons are designed to develop language without translations. The expectations are most children will understand how to follow simple one-step oral directions for moving around the classroom and identifying classroom objects, shapes, people, colors and body parts. Some will progress more and will respond to simple either/or questions with gestures and single-word answers using the target language of the unit.



**SONGS**

**Head, Shoulders, Knees, Toes**

Touch body parts and sing:  
*Head, shoulders, knees & toes  
 eyes, ears, mouth & nose,  
 head, shoulders, knees & toes.*

**Colors Song**

Point to different colors. Sing this song for each color: *Blue, blue, I see blue (Repeat 3xs)*  
*Touch something blue!* Touch different objects each time.

**Where is Thumpkin? (Family)**

Use fingers to name family members. Then hide your hand. Sing: *"Where is: mommy, daddy, sister, brother, etc."*  
 Show a finger, say: *"Here I am!"*  
 Sing it again for each names.

**ACTIVITIES**

**Shapes Hunt**

At home or in your neighborhood walk around and spot different shapes like a circle, triangle, square or rectangle. Use hands or fingers to show how big or little they are.

**Counting**

Use your body to practice counting. Count on fingers. Show how many using your fingers. Clap, walk or jump a number of times, like 5 or 10.

**Shapes Pictures and Art**

Cut paper shapes to glue and draw on to make creative pictures like a silly body, face or object. Talk about the colors and shapes.

**GAMES**

**"I Spy" Colors or Shapes**

Say: *I spy with my little eye something that is red!* Then children try to guess what it is. Give clues or make riddles.

**Shapes or Numbers Dominoes**

Use Babble Tree's language playing cards to practice names of shapes and numbers.

**Classroom Objects Memory**

Use Babble Tree's language playing cards to learn the names of classroom objects / school tools.

**STORIES**

**Brown Bear Brown Bear by Eric Carle** to practice colors

**Bear in a Square by Stella Blackstone** to identify shapes

**Hand, Head, Finger, Nose by Margaret Japel** body

**If You're Happy and You Know It by Margaret Japel** movements and body

*Participating in these activities in both the home language and the new language will benefit the child's oral language skills.*

CLASSROOM SHAPES   COLORS		BODY PARTS	
Stand up	Circle	Cover	Chest
Sit down	Square	Open	Arm
Walk	Triangle	Close	Elbow
Pass	Rectangle	Move	Hands
Touch			Fingers
Point to	Red	Eyes	Legs
Find	Blue	Nose	Feet
	Yellow	Mouth	Toes
Book	Orange	Ears	Back
Pencil	Black	Head	Body
Crayon	Green	Hair	Knees
Paper	Brown	Face	Shoulder
Table	White	Teeth	Cheeks

COUNTING AND NUMERALS		FAMILY	
How many?	Eight	Walk to	Grandma
Count	Nine	Go to	Grandpa
Color	Ten	Pick up	Uncle
Look for		Put down	Aunt
Where is...?	More	Give	Cousin
	Less	Hold	
One		Carry	Boy
Two	Same		Girl
Three	Different	Mom / Mother	
Four		Dad / Father	Man
Five	Numbers	Baby	Woman
Six	Shapes	Sister	
Seven		Brother	People