What To Teach and How To Teach It:

Evidence Based Practices for Developing Emergent Literacy Skills in Preschoolers Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and Use Spoken Language

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Abstract

Literacy deficits in the early years of schooling have long term implications for student outcomes. Deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children who use spoken language risk lagging their hearing peers on measures of both language and literacy. Long-term language and literacy outcomes can be improved through appropriate and effective emergent literacy intervention of both code-related and meaning-based skills. Selected areas of focus are documented by peer-reviewed research specific to the emergent literacy needs of young children who are deaf and hard of hearing and use spoken language. Additionally, developmentally appropriate practices outlined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children are considered. Strategies for direct, explicit instruction and play-based learning aim to improve long-term literacy outcomes for this population of learners.

Code Related Skills

Print Concept Knowledge

- Pre-teach vocabulary for temporal and spatial concepts
- Direct attention to features of written language
- Use visual cues to highlight print concepts
- Select books with high print salience (large font size, few words/pages, text embedded in illustrations)
- Repetition
- Educate parents on use of strategies

Alphabetic Knowledge

- Use the phonological structure of letter names to facilitate letter-sound associations
- DHH learners benefit from acoustic cues in vowel/consonant letter names (f, l, m, n, r, s, x)
- DHH learners benefit from visual cues such as mouth shape
- Embed/highlight letter names when reading and writing

Phonemic Awareness

- Direct instruction of component skills
- Embed exposure & practice into reading, writing, discourse
- Pre-teach instructional vocabulary
- Pair phonemes with graphemes
- Provide multiple opportunities for skill development & practice
- Develops over time

Meaning Based Skills

Vocabulary

- Theme-based learning develops conceptual schemes
- Pre-select vocabulary targets
- Select Tier 1, 2, & 3 words
- Select nouns, verbs, and descriptors
- Create child-friendly definitions
- Pair new words with visual and/or kinesthetic cues
- Provide multiple opportunities for receptive and expressive practice
- Highlight target words in reading & conversation

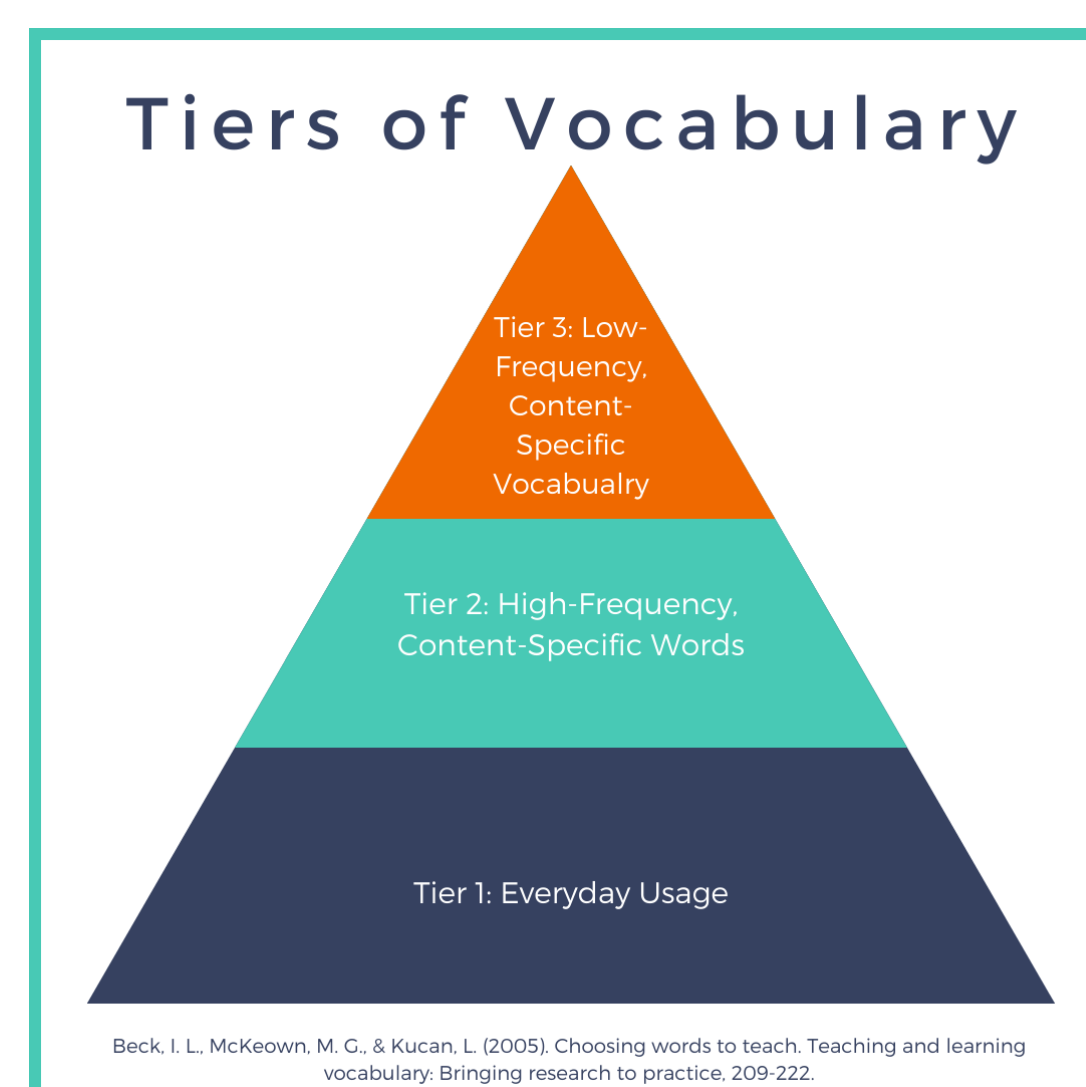### Oral Language & Discourse

- Create multiple opportunities to use target words and express concepts
- Model complex language
- Ask open-ended questions
- Acknowledge student comments
- Use expansions and recasts
- Retell & record past experiences
- Embed code-based literacy skills

Dialogic Reading

- Select one fiction and one non-fiction book per theme
- Multiple readings
- Embed code-based skills
- Highlight target vocabulary
- Ask a variety of questions: competence, abstract, relational
- PEER method: prompt child's response, evaluate &expand, re-prompt child to repeat vocabulary

Literacy Rich Play

- Incorporate highly contextualized, meaningful, & familiar concepts from stories and life
- Helps young children to better understand language concepts
- Helps young children to use more meaningful language
- Fosters self-regulation, language, cognition, & social competencies
- Fosters content knowledge acquisition across disciplines
- Essential for all children

Tiers of Vocabulary

Tier 3: Low-Frequency, Content-Specific Vocabulary

Tier 2: High-Frequency, Content-Specific Words

Tier 1: Everyday Usage

Beck, I. L, McKeown, M. G., & Kucan, L. (2005) Choosing words to teach. Teaching and learning vocabulary. Bringing research to practice. 209-222.

Educator Resource

References

Auditory Access

Early identification & intervention
Auditory training
Monitor & maintain hearing technology
Optimal listening environment