

STAGES OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

5

1

PRE-PRODUCTION

What should you expect at this stage?

This stage is also known as the “silent period.” Children do not speak, but are actively listening to the sounds and words of the new language that they are immersed in.

What can you do about it?

Continue to immerse your child in a rich language environment. Continue to use the new language to elicit nonverbal responses, or ask a child questions in a new language and allow them to respond in their first language.



2

EARLY PRODUCTION

What should you expect at this stage?

Children will begin to say a few words and short phrases. There will likely be grammatical errors (*and that's okay!*).

What can you do about it?

Ask yes/no questions to children. Accept one or two-word answers. Build basic vocabulary and talk about objects in your surroundings. Read stories and continue to immerse children in a rich language environment.

“ Mommy ”

“ I hungry. ”

“ Daddy bye-bye. ”

3

SPEECH EMERGENCE

What should you expect at this stage?

Children can string words together into phrases, sentences, and questions. Comprehension continues to increase. Grammatical accuracy improves.

What can you do about it?

Bring in a diversity of text through stories and educational media. Build academic vocabulary (e.g. *introduce different shapes*). Write simple stories together.

“ I want this shirt. ”

“ Where did dog go? ”

[Child can recite stories with simple sentence patterns]

4

INTERMEDIATE FLUENCY

What should you expect at this stage?

Children gain fluency and can use complex sentences in speech or writing to express opinions and share thoughts. Grammar will be more consistent and accurate.

What can you do about it?

Provide opportunities for children to use the language in different subject areas and formal settings. Encourage children to learn new content and concepts in this new language. Move away from focusing only on language development.

“ I really don't like... because... ”

“ Remember when we did... and this happened and that happened? ”

5

ADVANCED FLUENCY

What should you expect at this stage?

Children will be proficient and fluent with near-native fluency. Children may misuse idiomatic expressions at times and, depending on the language and the child, may have a slight accent.

What can you do about it?

Continue to encourage your child to use the language in authentic social and formal situations and to express themselves consistently.

[Nothing different from a child's first language.]

