

# Foundational Language Development (FLD)

## Understanding Language (Receptive) <sup>1</sup>

### 1 Understanding Language (Receptive) <sup>1</sup>

Child understands increasingly complex language, including vocabulary in home language, English, sign language, or Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

#### Responding

- E Responds to sounds or sights nearby in the environment **EARLIER**
- L Orients toward the source of sounds or tracks sights in the environment, including familiar voices or faces **LATER**

#### Exploring

- E Shows understanding that communication with gestures, words, or signs carries meaning **EARLIER**
- M Shows understanding of a variety of single words in their environment **MIDDLE**
- L Shows understanding of frequently used simple phrases or sentences, in the present **LATER**

#### Building

- E Shows understanding of phrases or sentences, including those referring to the past or future **EARLIER**
- M Shows understanding of vocabulary that describes attributes and comparisons in context (e.g., in conversations, stories, or learning activities) **MIDDLE**
- L Shows understanding of language, which refers to abstract concepts, including imaginary events **LATER**

#### Integrating

- E Shows understanding of a variety of statements that explain how or why things happen **EARLIER**
- M Shows understanding of a variety of statements that explain how, why, or the order in which things happen **MIDDLE**
- L Shows understanding of a variety of verbs that differ in manner (e.g., "look," "peek," "glare") and adjectives that differ in intensity (e.g., "large," "gigantic") **LATER**

## Using Language (Expressive) <sup>2</sup>

### 2 Using Language (Expressive) <sup>2</sup>

**Child uses increasingly complex language, including vocabulary, sentences, questions, narratives, and explanations, in their home language, English, sign language, or Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)**

### **Responding**

- E** Makes sounds or moves hands spontaneously **EARLIER**
- L** Makes sounds, gestures, or facial expressions with intention **LATER**

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### **Exploring**

- E** Uses vocal sounds with multiple syllables or hand movements in language-like sequences with the intention to communicate **EARLIER**
- M** Uses a growing variety of single words, word approximations, signs, words and signs together, conventional gestures, or symbols to communicate **MIDDLE**
- L** Combines two words, signs, a word and a sign, or symbols to communicate simple ideas **LATER**

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### **Building**

- E** Uses phrases and sentences of more than two words, signs, words and signs together, or symbols, including a variety of nouns, verbs, or pronouns to communicate **EARLIER**
- M** Uses phrases and sentences that contain nouns, verbs, and their modifiers (e.g., adjectives, adverbs) **MIDDLE**
- L** Uses complete sentences that communicate ideas or simple stories using common connecting words, signs, words and signs, or symbols **LATER**

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### **Integrating**

- E** Uses complex sentences to describe the relationships between people, objects, or events using words, signs, words and signs together, or symbols **EARLIER**
- M** Combines sentences to communicate complex ideas, providing additional detail about relationships between people, objects, or events using words, signs, words and signs together, or symbols **MIDDLE**
- L** Uses most of the grammar of adultlike language, using words, signs, words and signs together, or symbols **LATER**

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## **Shared Communication and Conversation 3**

### **3 Shared Communication and Conversation 3**

**Child engages in back-and-forth communication with shared focus in increasingly extended conversations, using home language, English, sign language, or augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)**

### **Responding**

- E** Responds to others **EARLIER**
- L** Pays attention when an adult communicates to them **LATER**

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### Exploring

- E Imitates adult speech sounds or signs and engages in turn-taking through vocalization, gestures, or eye gaze **EARLIER**
- M Uses single gestures, words, or signs to take turns in brief back-and-forth communication with adults, including responding to simple questions **MIDDLE**
- L Uses combinations of words, gestures, and signs to take turns in brief back-and-forth communication **LATER**

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### Building

- E Engages in brief conversations on topic for several turns, sharing opinions and thoughts **EARLIER**
- M Engages in conversations, building on the other person's ideas **MIDDLE**
- L Adjusts responses to meet the needs of the other person during conversations (e.g., providing clarifying comments), spoken or signed **LATER**

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### Integrating

- E Expands on ideas of others during conversations by adding detail, making predictions, or offering possible solutions **EARLIER**
- M Seeks additional information during extended conversations to understand and build on the ideas and perspectives of others **MIDDLE**
- L Displays appropriate turn-taking and social conventions of conversation **LATER**

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## Foundational Literacy Skills <sup>4</sup>

### 4 Foundational Literacy Skills <sup>4</sup>

**Child shows increasing ability to manipulate and combine components of language related to early literacy: phonological awareness for children learning to communicate using spoken language; location, handshapes, and movement for children learning to communicate using sign language; and recognition, combination, and use in set phrases for children learning to communicate using Augmentative and**

### Exploring

- E There are no earlier levels for this measure. **EARLIER**
- M Demonstrates awareness of variations in sounds **MIDDLE**
- M Attends, when prompted, to hands or a person who is signing **MIDDLE**
- M Participates in cause and effect play **MIDDLE**
- L Engages in play with syllables or sounds in words or rhymes **LATER**
- L Produces familiar fingerspelled words as signs **LATER**
- L Explores devices or symbols **LATER**

## Alternative Communication (AAC) symbols

### Building

- E Engages in familiar rhymes or songs **EARLIER**
- E Plays with how signs are produced **EARLIER**
- E Points to familiar symbols following modeling from an adult **EARLIER**
- M Demonstrates understanding of the syllables in words with two or more syllables **MIDDLE**
- M Recognizes the phonological features of signs (e.g., handshape, location, and movement) **MIDDLE**
- M Points to a few core words that are introduced and reinforced by an adult **MIDDLE**
- L Isolates and pronounces the first sound of a word, with support of pictures or objects **LATER**
- L Produces signs that have specific phonological features of signs **LATER**
- L Isolates the first sound of a spoken word, with support of pictures or objects **LATER**

### Integrating

- E Blends onset and rimes into words in speech, with adult support **EARLIER**
- E Segments signs to modify the meaning **EARLIER**
- E Demonstrates understanding of how language is organized on AAC device to access non-core words **EARLIER**
- M Segments onset and rime of single-syllable spoken words in English, or segments each syllable of two-syllable words in Spanish **MIDDLE**
- M Segments a sentence into isolated signs **MIDDLE**
- M Segments a sentence composed of AAC symbols or print into its core units of meaning **MIDDLE**
- L Segments spoken single-syllable words into their complete sequence of individual sounds, or segments each syllable of three-syllable words in Spanish **LATER**
- L Demonstrates understanding that the same idea can be communicated in different ways **LATER**
- L Segments spoken single-syllable words into their complete sequence of individual sounds **LATER**

## Alphabetic and Print Knowledge\* 5

### 5 Alphabetic and Print Knowledge\* 5

Child shows increasing awareness of symbols, characters, or letters in the environment, including identifying how letter and word names, sounds, or

### Exploring

- E There are no earlier levels for this measure. **EARLIER**
- M Follows along briefly when an adult names pictures or objects in a book **MIDDLE**
- L Demonstrates awareness that pictures or objects can represent people or things **LATER**

**fingerspelling  
correspond to printed  
text or braille**

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**Building**

- E Distinguishes letters, signs, or characters (e.g., L with a picture of a mountain next to it) from other symbols or pictures **EARLIER**
- M Identifies some (3-10) letters by name in an alphabetic language **MIDDLE**
- M Identifies some characters (e.g., L; ) by meaning **MIDDLE**
- L Identifies about half of letters (11-15) by name in an alphabetic language **LATER**
- L Identifies own name in print **LATER**

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**Integrating**

- E Identifies the corresponding sounds or handshapes of about half of the letters in an alphabetic language **EARLIER**
- E Identifies a few familiar printed words **EARLIER**
- M For all children: Identifies the sounds or handshapes of all letters in an alphabetic language **MIDDLE**
- M demonstrates one of the following: **MIDDLE**
  - 1 For children who use a spoken language: Decodes regularly spelled one-syllable words in English or two-syllable words in Spanish
  - 2 For children who do not use a spoken language: Identifies a growing variety of printed words
- L For children who use a spoken language: Decodes regularly spelled two-syllable words in English or three-syllable words in Spanish in isolation and within sentences **LATER**
- L For children who do not use a spoken language: Shows understanding of frequently used simple phrases or sentences in written English

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**Writing**

**Child shows increasing  
ability to write using  
marks, scribbles,  
drawings, letters,  
characters, or words to  
represent meaning\***

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**Writing**

**Exploring**

- E There are no earlier levels for this measure. **EARLIER**
- M Makes marks on paper or other surfaces (e.g., tablet) when provided with writing materials **MIDDLE**
- L Makes scribble lines or imitates simple shapes on paper or other surfaces **LATER**

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**Building**

- E Describes their own drawings or scribbles **EARLIER**
- M Communicates that lines, curves, or drawings they write on paper or other surfaces represent letters, handshapes, characters, or fingerspelling **MIDDLE**
- L writes letters or characters that are familiar or are personally meaningful **LATER**

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## Integrating

- E** writes own name or other meaningful words using increasingly more recognizable letters or characters **EARLIER**
- M** Writes letters on a page to form a simple sentence to communicate opinions or to describe a picture they drew **MIDDLE**
- L** Writes a combination of sentences to communicate ideas, respond to a prompt from an adult, or recount an event **LATER**