



Teach Me Language: A Language Manual for children with autism, Asperger's syndrome and related developmental disorders.

By Sabrina Freeman, Lorelei Dake

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Teach Me Language was written because we saw the need for a book to provide specific language activities designed for children with autism, Asperger's syndrome, and other related pervasive developmental disorders. There are many books advocating one therapy method over another, as well as books chronicling a child's unexpected recovery from autism. A few of these books provide information on setting up therapy in the home; however, no books that we could find give hands-on, explicit instructions for working on the language needs specific to these children, despite that fact that delayed language is one of the most common and limiting symptoms of children with developmental disorders. This book is designed to do just that. *Teach Me Language* introduced exercises and drills that attack language weaknesses common to children with pervasive developmental disorders.

Teach Me Language is designed to be used by parents, speech therapist and/or trainers as part of a therapy program where language difficulties are being addressed. There are several conditions that must be met in order for this book to be useful:

The child must be a visual learner.

Children who have autism or have autistic-like disorders (i.e. pervasive developmental delays [P.D.D.] or Asperger's syndrome) are almost always visual learners. By this we mean that they are able to assimilate information when it is presented to them visually as opposed to orally. The entire book is based on this principle.

The child must be table ready and relatively compliant

One of the major challenges with this population of children is that often it is difficult to get the child to sit down at a table, even for a moment. For the parent who is beginning down the long road of therapy, letting the child table ready is step one. By table ready, we mean that the child is attentive and able to follow simple directions. The instruments in this book will be helpful once the child is

table ready To train the child to be able to sit willingly at a table and work on language skills such as these, we strongly recommend behavioral programs to bring the child to this point. The authors can recommend Lovaas and Lovaas-type training because children who have been trained this way have good table skills and have been given the building blocks to assimilated information taught to them visually. However, any behavioral program that brings the child to the point where s/he is table ready is needed before attempting the drills and exercises set out in the following pages Once the child is table ready (even if only for 5 minutes at a time) then the language therapy can begin.

The child must be able to communicate in some way.

In order to sue these drills, the child must have some way to respond. If the child is verbal (even if s/he only repeats what others say - is echolalic) then eventually the child should be able to respond verbally. If the child is nonverbal, these drills can be effective if the child uses a picture communication system, a computer, or sign language, and can use one of these communication systems quite well.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Concepts and Strategies presented ... will prove to be a valuable resource for educators programming for individuals with autism [Spectrum Disorders]." -- *'Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities', Fall 1998.*

From the Publisher

Teach Me Language is designed for parents and therapists who teach language to children with autism, Asperger's syndrome and other related developmental disorders. Teach Me Language is a step by step "How to" manual with 400 pages of instructions, explanations, examples, games and cards that attack language weaknesses common to children with pervasive developmental disorders. This book is based on professional speech pathology methods developed specifically to teach children with autism and related disorders the language skills they need in school and in life.

Areas Targeted include Social Language, General Knowledge, Grammar and Syntax, Functional Knowledge, Written Expression, and Language-Based Academic Concepts such as sequencing, problem-solving, time, and money.

Children Who Benefit are visual learners. By this we mean that they are able to learn better with their eyes than their ears. The entire book is based on this principle. The child must be table ready (able to sit willingly at a table for short periods of time). The child must also be able to communicate to some extent, either through limited verbal communication, through signing or through the use of a picture communication system.

This Book should be introduced once the child has learned one and two word sentences, has some basic vocabulary, and can answer simple "What" or "Where" questions from a picture book. The exercises in Teach Me Language take the child from one and two word sentences to more complex sentences and lay the foundation for conversation. The various activities in Teach Me Language are appropriate for children from kindergarten through the teenage years, with simple adaptation for cognitive level i.e. the materials become more difficult, yet the activities remain structured in the same way.

From the Back Cover

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Maribel Davenport:

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Deborah Mazzarella:

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Michelle Jarvis:

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