



## Following Directions

## Construct Progression

### **DOMAIN:** LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION

**CLAIM:** Students can use and continue to develop effective listening and communication skills (e.g. verbal and non-verbal) for a range of purposes, audiences, and settings/contexts in increasingly complex ways.

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### Background Information

The purpose of this progression is to determine a child's receptive language abilities, not the child's compliance. Thus, when assessing children on this construct progression, consider only how the child responds to directions that are not objectionable to the child. That is, when assessing these skills, avoid giving directions that are related to a task the child does not like, directions that take the child away from a preferred task, and directions that are given when the child is experiencing negative emotions.

### Rationale

Children need to be able to listen carefully to a variety of language genres, including extended discourse (multiple sentences within a dialogue and narrative with adults and peers), and then children need to be able to communicate in ways that are understandable to both adults and children. These combined skills are foundational for later learning and literacy at home and at school (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). As most children enter school, these skills are well established within their home and community and must be adapted for the context of school. However, some children come to school with rich language at home and in the community, that may not be as aligned with the **context of school** (Heath, 1983; Vernon-Feagans, 1996).

For instance, some communities value dynamic, overlapping communication, where multiple speakers speak or jump into the conversation at the same time. Yet, school conventions require children to wait their turn, speak one-at-a-time, and often communicate directly to the teacher or adult. Children who do not have extensive practice with such turn-taking routines will benefit from explicit instruction in listening and communicating in order to learn and understand the **conventions of school** (Vernon-Feagans, 1996).

All children need to listen carefully to the details of instruction in the classroom and increasingly be able to ask and answer questions. In particular, children must be able to recognize when they do not understand and find ways to both verbally and nonverbally gain access to the information they need to learn. School should provide the opportunity for all children to communicate at length with diverse children and adults in a supportive way that provides scaffolding for both listening and communicating.

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Understanding	Skills	Performance Descriptors	Examples
The child demonstrates his/her receptive language abilities by understanding and responding appropriately to directions.	A. Completes one-step directions when support is provided in the form of visuals, gestures, or modeling.	The child verbally and/or physically completes one-step directions when support is provided (e.g., visuals, reminders, gestures, or modeling.)	<i>When directed by the teacher to pick up a pencil off the table, Angie looks around the room but does not pick up the pencil. The teacher then points to the table while repeating the directions. Angie then picks up the pencil.</i>
	B. Completes one-step directions (without support provided).	The child verbally and/or physically completes one-step directions without support.	<i>When directed by the teacher to pick up a pencil off the table, Zion picks up the pencil.</i>  <i>As children are lining up for lunch, the teacher signs to Alicia to wash her hands. Alicia goes to the sink and washes her hands.</i>
	C. PARTIALLY completes two-step directions (without support provided) by completing only one step or completing the steps out of order.	The child PARTIALLY completes two-step directions (without support provided) by completing only one step or completing the steps out of order.	<i>The teacher says, "Fold your paper in half, and then cut it into two pieces." April cuts her paper into two pieces without folding it [completing only one step], and Daniel cuts his paper into two pieces and then folds each of them [completing the steps out of order].</i>
	D. Completes two-step directions in the correct order (without support provided).	The child completes two-step directions in the correct order (without support provided).	<i>The teacher says, "Fold your paper in half, and then cut it into two pieces." Ramon folds his paper in half and then cuts it into two pieces [completing each step in the correct order].</i>  <i>Teacher says to Vanessa, "Tell me one thing you want to do today at recess and then go line up at the door." Vanessa says, "I want to play soccer," in her home language and then lines up at the door.</i>
	E. PARTIALLY completes three-step directions (without support provided) by completing two steps, or completing the steps out of order.	The child verbally and/or physically PARTIALLY completes three-step directions (without support provided) by completing two steps, or completing the steps out of order.	<i>A teacher says to a small group of students, "Put a long, red block down first, then put a short, blue block on top, and then roll the ball to knock down the blocks." Leela puts down a long, red block and then rolls the ball [completing only two steps]. Mackenzie puts down a short, blue block, then puts a long, red block down, and then rolls the ball [completing the steps out of order].</i>

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	F. Completes three-step directions in the correct order (without support provided).	The child completes three-step directions in the correct order (without support provided).	<i>Using ASL, the teacher signs to Shannon, "Please unpack your book bag, bring your lunch money to me, and then sharpen your pencil." Shannon unpacks her book bag, brings her lunch money to the teacher, and then sharpens her pencil [completing each step in the correct order.]</i>

## RESOURCES

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