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The Processing Program

Speech-language pathologists, speech-language paraprofessionals, learning disabilities specialists, special education teachers, teachers of children with emotional disorders, and parents can use the Language Webs and AAI technique. These individuals may use *The Processing Program—2nd Ed.* with children individually because the AAI technique for each child is unique. However, you may use the program with small groups of children (e.g., two to three) if the children have similar needs.

Goals

The goals of *The Processing Program—2nd Ed.*, are to:

- Facilitate processing of various linguistic concepts, including nouns, prepositions, adjectives, and the singular/plural noun inflection /s, z, iz/ (see Tables 1–6, on pages 6–8, for a complete listing of concepts).
- Facilitate processing of linguistic concepts in increasingly longer and more complex sentences.
- Help children achieve success in following auditory directions.
- Provide a technique to improve processing speed and efficiency, which can also be used in other intervention activities.
- Provide communication partners, including families and teachers, with a technique to help the child learn outside the intervention setting: in the classroom, at play, while someone reads to the child, in conversation with the child, and in structured listening tasks.
- Provide a link from oral to written literacy by using written language to help in the intervention process.

Components

The components of *The Processing Program—2nd Ed.* include the *Introduction* (which describes the Language Web frameworks and the AAI technique) and the picture plates with commands. In addition, there are suggestions for monitoring progress and involving other communication partners in the intervention process.

Language Webs

The Language Webs form the underlying organizational structure of the commands in *The Processing Program—2nd Ed.* by combining the linguistic concepts included in the program into increasingly longer and more complex commands. A framework of commands with a great deal of language redundancy is the result. Although each level of *The Processing Program—2nd Ed.* has a unique Language Web, the

Language Web from one level frames the activities for the next level. This maintains continuity from level to level within the program.

Within each of the three Language Webs in *The Processing Program—2nd Ed.*, each new combination of concepts is a *sublevel*. *Level 1* includes 32 sublevels, *Level 2* includes 25 sublevels, and *Level 3* includes 14 sublevels. **Tables 1, 3, and 5** list the concepts used to create the sublevels within each of the Language Webs for *Levels 1, 2, and 3*. As seen in these tables, the presentation of concepts appears first in simple contexts and then in various combinations with other concepts. This presentation provides incremental steps and repetition for processing commands of increasing length and complexity. **Tables 2, 4, and 6** present the vocabulary terms used to represent the concepts at each of the three levels.

Altered Auditory Input (AAI) Technique

In the AAI technique, the clinician alters the oral input to the child with respect to the speed of presentation, the pattern of pausing, and the use of prosody. The clinician then matches these modifications to the child's processing ability. The combination of parameters needing altering in the AAI technique is unique to each child. Some children need only a slightly slower-than-normal speaking rate to better process what they hear. Others need a significant slowing of input. For other children, it is a requirement to slow the speaking rate and add pauses. Fewer children require an increase or decrease in the prosodic patterns of speech while some children require altering of all three parameters to process the spoken message.

The purpose for using the AAI technique is to make the spoken message (i.e., the oral input) easier for the child to process. This in turn makes it easier for the child to learn new language. The AAI technique strengthens language processing skills as well. When the child processes the new linguistic concepts with accuracy using the AAI technique, you can begin to fade its use. Fading the parameters of the AAI technique occurs by increasing the speed of input, decreasing pausing, and returning prosody to normal. For some children, elimination of the AAI technique can occur gradually. For others, parameters of the AAI technique may change over time as language learning and processing improve, but the need for some modification of the spoken message remains. This is particularly true for children with autism or other severe language disorders.

The picture plates and commands in *The Processing Program—2nd Ed.* help determine the parameters of the AAI technique to modify. The modification(s) used during the activities of *The Processing Program—2nd Ed.*, as well as during other intervention activities, maximize the benefits from all instruction provided. Ideally, the child's communication partners learn this technique in order to provide many opportunities during the course of everyday home, community, and school activities to improve language processing and, therefore, boost language acquisition. The AAI technique forms bridges among home, school, community, and the intervention setting, which increases generalization.



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