

Chapter Two covers the stages of language development during the first year of life. This begins with *Vegative Noises* in the first eight weeks – through *Cooing and Babbling* at about 20 weeks – *Vocal Play* at 20-30 weeks – *Babbling* 25 – 50 weeks and *Medolic Utterance* 9-18 months.

Crystal discusses the types of sounds that parents can listen for. He uses examples from well known studies to make his points. Perception and comprehension at that stage is also briefly discussed. Attention is given also to the interactive nature of language, even at this early stage. Perhaps this, as the fundamental impetus to language development, should be discussed at the beginning of the chapter rather than the end. It is fortunate that the point is made early in the book that stated ages should only be seen as a guide.

The final section in this chapter is valuable in its description and explanation of "motherese" (language mothers use with their children), and in the list of "do's and don'ts" when interacting with the child.

Chapter Three covers developments in the second year; how much children say, what children talk about, the meaning of the early words and the development of early grammar in the two-word stage. Crystal spends time discussing the characteristics of the first 50 words, including the phonological features. An appendix is provided for parents to record these.

Chapter Four discusses the great leap in language development in the third year when the child begins to produce much longer sentences. Sentences increase not merely in length but in complexity, by development at the word, phrase and clause level.

Vocabulary growth is so rapid it is virtually impossible to keep a record of it at this stage. Again Crystal elaborates on certain semantic features of children's speech at this time; time concept, the use of negatives and grammatical morphemes. The concept of "Mean Length of Utterance" (MLU) is introduced as a way of calculating the language stage of a child. This is done by counting the meaning units in each sentence. An appendix is included for the purpose of recording this.

The Pre-School Years are discussed in *Chapter 5*. These are marked by the ability of children to use complex sentences. This begins with the sudden discovery of "and", and progresses to the use of other conjunctions. Crystal touches on the "normalcy" of non-fluent behaviour at this stage, as the child struggles to express more complex ideas with elaborate vocabulary and much more complex sentences. The use and understanding of the passive tense and embedded sentences are also described. Ideas are presented on how to check your child's linguistic level at this stage, and an appendix is included for record keeping.

It was pleasing to see *Chapter 6* entitled "Early School Years", as many books fail to comment on language development, once children reach this level. However, Crystal discusses only grammatical and metalinguistic developments and has failed to address the most importance development at this stage. This development is the change in language used for communication to the language used for learning.

There are brief sections on situations that may complicate language development such as bilingualism and the language of twins. He includes advice to parents whose children may not be following the expected course. Appendix Six, "Games which help language" is really extremely limited and there is a serious omission in not emphasizing the importance of literature, and shared reading experience as a vital part in language development.

Parents approaching child development with an enquiring mind will find this book interesting and informative. It would be useful also to professionals working with children, or advising parents, and perhaps even as a general introduction to the language area for student speech Pathologists, Psychologists and Teachers. However, there is a strong emphasis on listening to the child's expressive, particularly grammatical, development, while the equally fascinating, but less well researched areas of pragmatic and oral narrative development are virtually ignored. It would be a dedicated parent who would persist with language record keeping beyond the child's third year of life, but Crystal effectively presents some guidelines as to how this may be done.

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NO MORE SECRETS FOR ME
by **Oralee Wachter,**
Penguin, Australia, 1986.
\$4.95. 88 Pages

Child sexual assault is now recognized as a widespread social problem affecting a significant proportion of the population, and a number of strategies have been developed, which are aimed at preventing such assaults.

Traditional sexual assault prevention approaches have been either victim or offender orientated and have sought to control the behaviour of one or the other. Strategies that have recently been developed both in Australia and overseas have attempted to decrease the vulnerability of all children to sexual assault, teach them to recognize unsafe situations, develop their problem solving skills and help them to establish adult support networks. This book by Oralee Wachter is a useful resource to use in relation with children, on issues about sexual assault.

The book contains four short stories that are designed for parents to read with their children. In addition there is a useful section for parents which provides information on sexual assault, as well as sample questions which they may use to discuss the stories with their children.

All the stories are easy to read, however sometimes the language seems a little stilted and occasionally words are used which are not in common use in Australia. This however occurs infrequently, and as the stories are designed to be read aloud, parents could localize "sweater", "sweetshop" and "swerve a football" if this is so desired.

The first story, "Talking Helps", is about a young boy who does not like his babysitter undressing and bathing him. He discusses this with his mother who in turn talks with the babysitter and the situation is resolved. The suggested discussion area include identification of uncomfortable touching and possible solutions.

The second story, "Friendly Persuasion", is the story of a young girl, Lynn, who is persuaded to help a lady who is a stranger to her. The woman persuades Lynn to show her the way to the library and then leaves her alone with a puppy. When a man, claiming to be the woman's husband arrives, Lynn runs into a shop and the owner calls her mother. Discussion topics focus on the distinction between "friends", "strangers" and "friendly strangers" and on generating possible solutions when confronted with a situation.

The third story, "What If", is about Sam, a young boy who attends a school camp. One of the leaders attempts to trick Sam into taking his clothes off. Sam runs away and confides in another leader. He is reassured about the appropriateness of his actions.

The final story, "Promise Not to Tell", is about a girl, Maureen. Her stepfather indecently assaults her and makes her promise not to tell. Maureen confides in her friend who suggests she speaks to their teacher. Maureen does and help is provided. Discussion focuses on when to tell a secret and when to keep it, and how to help if someone confides in the child.

The book provides parents and children with an excellent resource to help them begin to discuss, what for many can be a difficult and embarrassing subject. Discussions with parents indicate that many find sexual assault a difficult area to raise with their children. This book could provide parents with a good place to start. It is easy to read, the suggestions for parents are helpful and the book is economically priced.

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