

EET- Expanding Expression Tool

Increasing oral language is a primary goal in the kindergarten program. Oral language is not only children's verbal abilities about items or topics that they are personally interested and excited about but also their ability to explain and describe everyday items and their use. This ability to mentally think about items and put into words their use in a clear concise description is an important literacy skill. Oral language ability is directly related to reading comprehension and interpretation of texts as well as in later grades children are asked to "show (or describe) don't tell" about events in their writing.

Expressive language is developed at the kindergarten level primarily through things that children are excited about and have meaning to them. They use their verbal skills to interact with friends in "play centers" as well to retell fun and favorite stories through the use of puppets and flannel boards as well as to explain their art work and drawings. Children need lots of practice using their own language to tell what is happening in their pictures and drawings as well as why they drew what they did. In addition they develop their oral ability by describing items and things around them.

A tool that we use here at Griswold School in kindergarten to develop student's oral language skills is the "**EET program.**" It consists of several spheres on a rope of sorts and each sphere has a specific meaning and the children learn the categories to aid them in describing items. This rope is then used during "Sharing / Show and Tell" as a weekly review and practice of describing items and their function.

The categories are:

Green: Group. What group does the item belong in?

Blue: do. What do you do with it or what does the item do?

Eye ball: What does it look like? Size? Shape? Color?

Wooden ball: What is it made of?

Pink Parts: What are the parts that make it up?

White where: Where would you find it/ where do you keep it?

Orange “?”: What else do you know about the item or do you want us to know?

Each of these categories also correlates to many of our other curriculum areas. For example determining the group that an item belongs; is the mathematical and scientific ability to sort and classify items. In turn each of the EET categories helps to support and foster growth in other academic areas.

An example of a well developed “paragraph level” description of an everyday item might sound like this:

It is in the “everyday items” group and you use it to keep your body healthy. It is long and thin and has a white handle with short brushes on one end. It is made of plastic and you buy it at a grocery store or pharmacy or you might get it from the dentist. I have one that I keep in my drawer in the bathroom and I use in the morning and before bed and any other time that I need to have a clean fresh mouth.

What is it? A toothbrush.