Addressing the Impact of Poverty: Strategies for SLPs
Marie C. Ireland, M.Ed. CCC-SLP, BCS-CL
Virginia Department of Education

Facts About Poverty
15% of people live in poverty
21% of children live in poverty (1 in 5)
29% of people with disabilities live in poverty
31% of single mother families live in poverty
An additional 33% live “close to poverty”

http://www.povertyusa.org/the-state-of-poverty/

Reminders
• Each child & family is unique
• This is a sensitive topic
• Be respectful of differences
• Be wary of generalizations
• Be aware that your experiences shape how you think

Intentions for The Session
Create a safe place for discussion. Explore concepts, research, and strategies. Build awareness that context is critical.

Types of Poverty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generational</th>
<th>Situational</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 generations or longer</td>
<td>Common for immigrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually involves welfare</td>
<td>Shorter time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belief on stuck</td>
<td>Result of circumstances</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short term &amp; survival not planning for future</td>
<td>Pride and belief of overcoming</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May refuse “charity”</td>
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Research on Poverty

Emotional Research
Many children face emotional and social instability. Children under 3 need:
• Reliable primary caregiver
• Safe predictable environment
• 10-20 hours of harmonious reciprocal interactions for “attunement”
• Enrichment through activities

Increased rates of low self esteem, powerlessness, depression and physical punishment

Ahnert et. al. 2006
Using a Limited Keyboard

1. What are the possible consequences or reactions of others?
2. If this is your normal “keyboard” how can you learn about new keys?
3. How would you view others communication using a full keyboard?

Emotional Keyboard

- Narrower range of appropriate responses
- Emotional responses not “wired” must be taught
- Explicit instruction is essential

Teaching with Poverty in Mind

By Eric Jensen  http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/109074.aspx

Chapter 2. How Poverty Affects Behavior and Academic Performance

Behavioral Research

- Behavior can be a response to stressors
- Increase in low -SES risk factors yields
- Increases impulsivity
- Decreases ability to delay gratification (Evans, 2003)
- Giving up or learned helplessness is an adaptive response to stress
- Students in poverty are more likely to give up or become passive and uninterested in school (Johnson, 1981)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wired</th>
<th>Taught</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>Humility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>Forgiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disgust</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Optimism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>Compassion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Sympathy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Patience</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Shame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gratitude</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unique and Individual Resources

1. Financial
2. Emotional
3. Mental
4. Spiritual
5. Physical
6. Support systems
7. Relationships and Role Models
8. Knowledge of Unspoken Rules

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Language Research

Registers
- Martin Joos (1972) documented the 5 registers of language across the world
- Montana-Hammon (1991) found generations of poverty linked to less formal registers

| Frozen | Formal | Consecutive | Casual | Intimate |

Quality of Language

Toddlers from middle and upper income families used more words talking to their parents than low-SES mothers used talking to their children (Bracey, 2006)

Specific Questions
- Formulation of specific (compared to general) questions can be an area of concern
- The importance of asking questions is linked to academic success (Marzano, 2007)

For each $5,000 in extra income annually, vocabulary is raised an average of 2 points on a standard scale (Perkins, Finegood & Swain, 2013)

Oral Language
- Present
- Context assists meaning
- Redundancy with non-verbal cues
- Cohesion using intonation
- May request clarification

Written Language
- Outside of present
- Context via only linguistic features
- Vocabulary and register shifts likely
- Cohesion via linguistic markers
- No requesting clarification

Tier 2 Vocabulary
- Are used during classroom discussions
- Are critical to understanding academic texts
- Require deliberate effort to learn when not present in home language environment
- Likely to appear in written texts than in speech
- Are rarely scaffolded by authors or teachers (contrast to tier 3 words)
Teaching Tier 2 Words

- Search “Tier 2 Vocabulary”
- https://www.flocabulary.com/wordlists/
- http://www.hpcsd.org/district.cfm?subpage=29208

**Strategies for SLPs and Educators**

**Emotional Strategies**

- Provide a safe predictable environment
- Strive for harmonious reciprocal interactions
- Provide enrichment through activities

Use explicit instruction to teach:

- Humility, Forgiveness, Empathy, Optimism, Compassion, Sympathy, Patience, Shame, Cooperation, Gratitude
- Teach strategies to deal with anger and frustration

**Behavior Strategies**

- Teach hope growth, & perseverance
- Differentiate between stress response and willful behaviors
- Alter the environment to reduce stress
  - Reduce homework
  - Use cooperative structures (less dictatorial)
  - Incorporate movement and hands on activities
- Behavior Strategies
- Empower students
- Teach conflict resolution
- Teach anger management strategies
- Teach goal setting
- Model problem solving and talk through steps
- Practice problem solving with students
- Explicitly teach social skills and hidden curriculum
Assess Executive Functioning
- Think aloud activities
- Interview to determine awareness

**Language Strategies**
- Teach a formal register and register shifts
  - Vocabulary
  - Pragmatics
  - Syntax
- Teach students how to ask specific questions
- Teach Tier 2 vocabulary - Instruction in all settings should address these needs

**Vocabulary**
1. Effective vocabulary instruction does not rely on definitions.
2. Students must represent their knowledge of words in linguistic and nonlinguistic ways.
3. Teaching word parts enhances students’ understanding of terms.
4. Students should discuss the terms they are learning and play with words.
5. Effective vocabulary instruction involves the gradual shaping of word meanings through multiple exposures.
6. Instruction should focus on terms that have a high probability of enhancing academic success.

Adapted from Building Academic Vocabulary by Marzano and Pickering, 2005

**Explicit Instruction on Functional Academic Strategies including:**
- Plan and how to start a task
- Organize an approach
- Develop a goal
- Establish a schedule
- Choose a strategy (what’s next)
- Monitor and problem solve interruptions/issues
- Sustained effort on task
- Evaluate outcomes

Additional Strategies for Educators
- Examine understanding and beliefs about poverty
- Use 5:1 positive to negative interactions
- Respect differences and teach language and behavior expectations
- Rethink incentives and motivators based on a middle class system
Strategies for Parents

Examine Perspectives: Yours and Theirs

Maternal Epistemological Perspectives and Variations in Mental State Talk
Hutchins, Bond, Silliman, & Bryant, 2009
- Examines mother’s view of self, child mind/voice, and child rearing
- Highlights differences between:
  - Silenced knower
  - Received knower
  - Subjective knower
  - Procedural knower
  - Constructed knower

Additional research
- Most powerful predictor of language was “If child initiated - did mother respond?”
- Wordless picture books generated more language and animation from parents

Family Strategies
- Teach the value of interaction and response to child’s utterances
- Teach that extensions are powerful for growing language and add new information
- Teach importance of daily, safe, harmonious interaction for child development

Goal Setting & Review

What research about poverty can you use in your work and to help other educators?
- Emotional / Behavioral Impact
- Language Differences

What research based strategies can you use in your work, with educators, and to help families?
- Emotional / Behavioral Strategies
- Language Strategies
- Strategies for Parents
## Comparison of Situational and Generational Poverty by Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Situational Poverty</th>
<th>Generational Poverty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priorities</td>
<td>Achievement, possessions, status</td>
<td>Survival, entertainment, the present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>Save, manage, invest</td>
<td>Spend on things that bring pleasure now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Can fit into the schedule</td>
<td>May be the center of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Punctuality, time is valuable</td>
<td>When it happens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Formal register used to get ahead</td>
<td>Casual register used for survival and entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Critical for future and earning money and respect</td>
<td>Value is abstract not an attainable goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>Reward for hard work after saving</td>
<td>Priority over education and future</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## References and Resources


