CHILDREN/s talk is often a subject of concern for the Head Start programs. The children who come into Head Start are typically behind in their language development as compared to the average 3 to 5 year old child. Even if there is that exceptional teacher of Head Start, the parents typically don't have the resources or the know-how to prepare the child for accelerated language.

As of this time, such opportunities are not provided in the lower socio-economic areas of our society. In the upper and middle socio-economic areas, there are preschools, academies, nurseries, and other child-care facilities which emphasize the child's oral language development through the grades.

For the early years through third grade level, it would appear that it is critical that all students have their oral language skills checked. If found lacking in this area, they would need to have remedial oral language stimulation. As children have the built-in ability to learn oral language, the oral language prerequisites to reading are essential. It is suggested that the average student from these areas is at the 16th percentile of the student body in the public schools. In the upper and middle socio-economic areas, there is a greater emphasis on oral language development, and the children are expected to develop their oral language skills in a more systematic way. In the lower socio-economic areas, the emphasis on oral language development is less, and the children may not have the same opportunities to develop their oral language skills.

The acquisition of oral language skills is critical for the child's future success in school. The child who is oral language disadvantaged is at a disadvantage in the classroom, and this disadvantage can carry over into adulthood. In order to ensure that all students have the opportunity to develop their oral language skills, it is important to provide opportunities for oral language development in the classroom and beyond.