

**WSU Parenting Education Series Webinar
Oct. 21, 2011; 1:30-2:45**

Everyday Interactions Are the Foundation for Early Learning:

Key Behaviors for Supporting Communication in Children 0-3

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There is a heightened awareness of the role of language as a driving force of intellectual development in young children. Being aware and staying mindful of the key components of how to best support early language during everyday contexts can be challenging for both professionals and family members. This discussion will focus on how basic behavioral and brain research can inform how we observe not only children, but also our own interactions with children. We will practice “translating” key findings into practice, by building on examples drawn from your experiences from classrooms to living rooms. Discover ways to further reflect on, enhance and refine what you are already doing, using current best evidence from research. Part 1 focuses key findings from research that describe foundation of language acquisition. Building on that, Part 2 emphasizes interpretation of those findings into everyday strategies

The discussion will support participants’ abilities to:

- Articulate the importance of first relationships and early communication in later learning
- Identify ways in which social interaction, play, and language are related
- Generate specific strategies to improve interactions at home and in classrooms to support early communication
- Deepen awareness of how basic brain and behavioral research on infants and young children can influence the quality of their experiences

Suggested readings and additional resources will be included in workshop materials.



Dr. Gina Lebedeva (“LEH-beh-dev-ah”) is the Translation, Outreach, and Education (TOE) Specialist at the University of Washington's Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences (I-LABS). Partnering with both local and national groups, their focus is on translating and disseminating current research discoveries in developmental cognitive neuroscience to educators, policy makers, parents and the public, to help bridge the gap between the science and practice of early learning.

Her doctoral research with Patricia Kuhl explored several aspects of language acquisition and development including relationships between speech perception, emergent language and early literacy, word learning in toddlers. She led studies examining infant-directed speech, brain-behavior relationships in preschoolers, and parallels between infants' perception of music and speech. Dr. Lebedeva is also trained as a speech-language pathologist, specializing in early intervention and infant mental health. With a foundation in evidence-based practice and coaching the caregiver-infant relationship, she believes that by translating research on how early experiences sculpt the brain, we can better support children's learning, whether through policies, classroom practices or everyday interactions.

Prior to joining UW, Dr. Lebedeva's research in psycholinguistics led to a magna cum laude BS from Cornell University, after which she managed the Language and Cognition Lab at Columbia University. A native of Pittsburgh and resident of Seattle, her other passions include playing the oboe, social dancing with her husband, and witnessing magical moments in early learning, courtesy her son.

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