

Gestalt Language Processors

Classroom Support

Gestalt language processors (GLP) are "whole to part" thinkers and acquire language in chunks. These chunks of language, sometimes called "echolalia", "scripts" or "gestalts", are a vital component of gestalt language development. With the right language environment and support, these gestalts will become more flexible over time. The child will be able to mix and match portions of the gestalts (mitigating) and later free single words from these gestalts. These single words will allow the child to generate original, self-generated language. We need to embrace the child's echolalia (gestalts) in order to support the child through the Stages of Natural Language Acquisition (NLA).



The classroom is a busy place with a lot of individual and general needs to consider. When supporting GLPs in the classroom, there are some easy things you can do to support these children in their language development journey.

Tips for Teachers and Support Staff

- Don't try to eliminate or extinguish the script (gestalt). Echolalia communicates.
- Acknowledge their script and accept it as communication. Smile, head nod, repeat it back to them.
- Try to eliminate questioning as a form of connection and interaction. Try declarative language instead. Comment, narrate and pause. Most GLPs aren't ready to answer questions until they are self-generating language (NLA Stages 3-4+).
- Don't take scripts literally. Most aren't literal. Try to find the meaning behind the script. Most are linked to a dramatic or emotional experience for the child that made the script "stick."
- Work with the child's school speech-language pathologist in order to understand how to individualize and figure out what your gestalt language processor needs.

Blanc, M. 2012. Natural Language Acquisition on the Autism Spectrum: The Journey from Echolalia to Self-Generated Language.