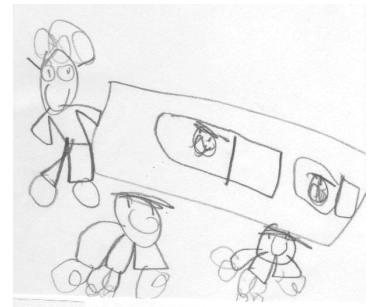
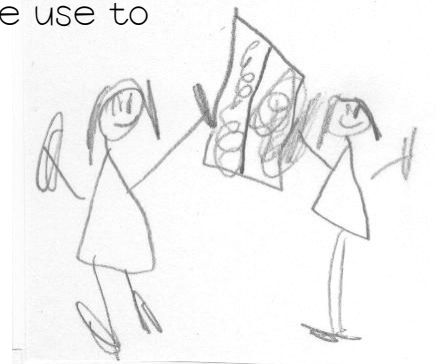




The Uses of Language

There are 7 basic functions of language that we use to communicate:

1. **Instrumental** – used to satisfy needs or wants
“I want a glass of water.”
2. **Regulatory** – used to control others
“Please put your pajamas on.”
3. **Interactional** – used to create interactions
“Do you want to ride bikes with me?”
4. **Personal** – used to express thoughts and feelings
“I like it when Grandma hugs me.”
5. **Imaginative** – used to create imaginative worlds
“Let’s pretend the couch is a boat.”
6. **Heuristic** – used to seek information
“Why aren’t there any dinosaurs at the zoo?”
7. **Informative** – used to communicate information
“Those puffy clouds with the flat bottoms are called Cumulus clouds.”



For children to become proficient in oral language, they must be able to both understand and use all seven functions. In order to do this, they must experience all these types of language on a daily basis.

These seven functions really describe a hierarchy of language use, just as there is a hierarchy of thinking skills. Studies have found that parents and teachers mostly use the first two levels of language – instrumental and regulatory – we spend a great deal of time telling children where to go and what to do. But we know that in order to achieve higher levels of language we must make a conscious effort to use and encourage all different types of language on a regular basis.

