

# Sara's Day in Preschool

## Background

Sara is 4.7 years old and was born in the U.S. to Russian immigrant parents who are first generation immigrants. Sara's maternal grandparents live nearby. They have lived in the U.S. for 5 years. She has been enrolled in a Preschool For All classroom for 6 months. This is her first exposure to school. The teachers speak only English and there are no other Russian speaking children in the class.

## Observation

Sara is sitting on the rug next to a wooden doll house with small wooden people and furniture. She picks up the wooden people and places each one slowly on the roof of the house. She talks softly in Russian using a different tone of voice as she places the dolls on the roof. A boy approaches the doll house, sits down next to Sara and picks up one of the people. Sara raises her voice and says, "No, you not play." The boy does not look up and continues to play with the person. Sara raises her voice again and says, "I not with you play." The boy continues to play. Sara grimace and yells loudly, "no, no!" as she pulls the house towards her but the boy grabs onto the house and slides it along the rug as Sara moves it. A teacher across the room calls to Sara, "If something is wrong you need to tell them." The teacher then turns back to serving snack. Sara calls back to the teacher, "I sue. They no play." The teacher does not respond. Sara stands up and walk to the water table. She picks up a baster and squeezes water into a cup. She looks up at a parent volunteer as she passes and says, "Curious George do that." The parent smiles. Sara continues to squeeze water into the cup until it is nearly full. She turns in the direction of a teacher several feet away and calls, "See how many water I have". The teacher smiles. Sara sets the cup and the baster in the water and walks toward a small group of children sitting on the floor with a teacher who is showing pictures on an iPad. Sara stands behind the group and looks at the iPad as the teacher shows an ostrich egg. "What doing, Ms. S?" The teacher responds, "We're looking at an ostrich egg." Sara positions herself behind the groups and stands to watch for another moment while they talk about the egg. Sara begins looking around the room and then walks toward a table with play dough. There are 3 children and a teacher at the table. She sits down, gets some play dough and rolls the piece flat. She asks the teacher, "I need heart." The teacher does not respond so Sara walks to the other side of the table and picks up the heart cookie cutter and returns to her seat. She presses it into the playdough. The teacher looks at her and asks, "What is it?" Sara responds "A heart" as her offers it to the teacher who says 'thank you'.

After reading the observational notes, answer the following questions:

What stage of language acquisition is Sara demonstrating? What is your evidence?

What can she do with her language?

What else do you notice about Sara's language environment?

What could you have done to enrich Sara's experiences in this situation?