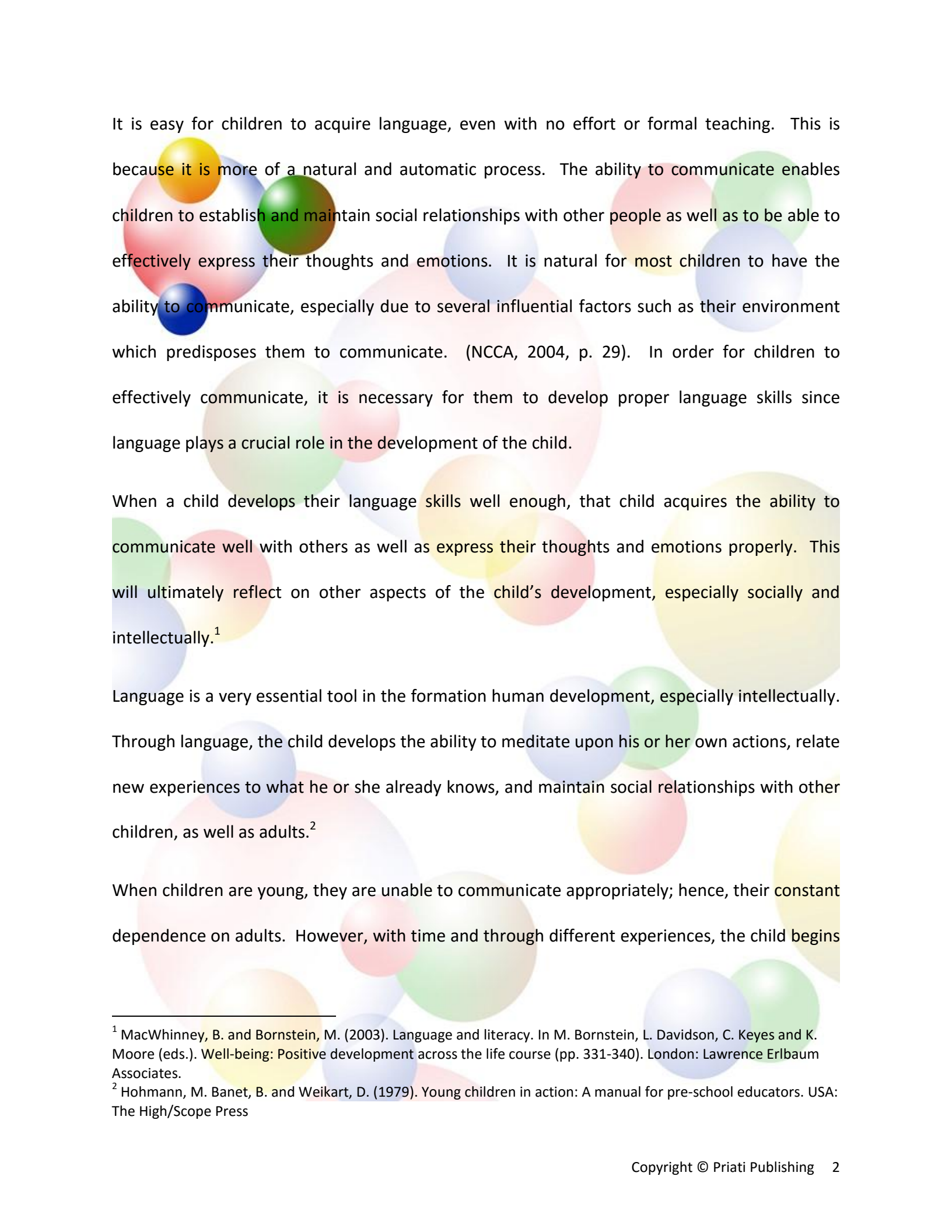




***HOW CHILDREN  
LEARN  
LANGUAGE***



It is easy for children to acquire language, even with no effort or formal teaching. This is because it is more of a natural and automatic process. The ability to communicate enables children to establish and maintain social relationships with other people as well as to be able to effectively express their thoughts and emotions. It is natural for most children to have the ability to communicate, especially due to several influential factors such as their environment which predisposes them to communicate. (NCCA, 2004, p. 29). In order for children to effectively communicate, it is necessary for them to develop proper language skills since language plays a crucial role in the development of the child.

When a child develops their language skills well enough, that child acquires the ability to communicate well with others as well as express their thoughts and emotions properly. This will ultimately reflect on other aspects of the child's development, especially socially and intellectually.<sup>1</sup>

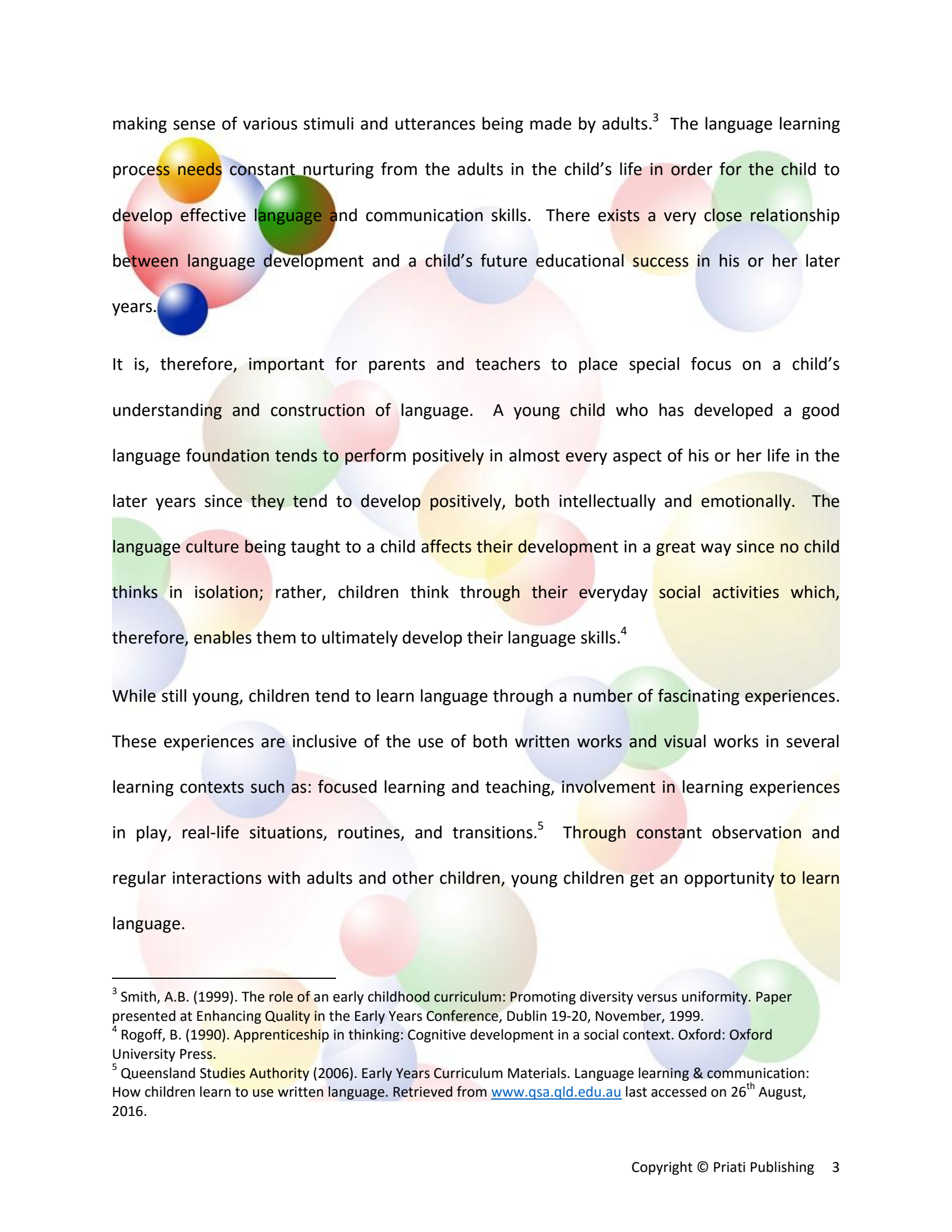
Language is a very essential tool in the formation human development, especially intellectually. Through language, the child develops the ability to meditate upon his or her own actions, relate new experiences to what he or she already knows, and maintain social relationships with other children, as well as adults.<sup>2</sup>

When children are young, they are unable to communicate appropriately; hence, their constant dependence on adults. However, with time and through different experiences, the child begins

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<sup>1</sup> MacWhinney, B. and Bornstein, M. (2003). Language and literacy. In M. Bornstein, L. Davidson, C. Keyes and K. Moore (eds.). Well-being: Positive development across the life course (pp. 331-340). London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

<sup>2</sup> Hohmann, M. Banet, B. and Weikart, D. (1979). Young children in action: A manual for pre-school educators. USA: The High/Scope Press



making sense of various stimuli and utterances being made by adults.<sup>3</sup> The language learning process needs constant nurturing from the adults in the child's life in order for the child to develop effective language and communication skills. There exists a very close relationship between language development and a child's future educational success in his or her later years.

It is, therefore, important for parents and teachers to place special focus on a child's understanding and construction of language. A young child who has developed a good language foundation tends to perform positively in almost every aspect of his or her life in the later years since they tend to develop positively, both intellectually and emotionally. The language culture being taught to a child affects their development in a great way since no child thinks in isolation; rather, children think through their everyday social activities which, therefore, enables them to ultimately develop their language skills.<sup>4</sup>

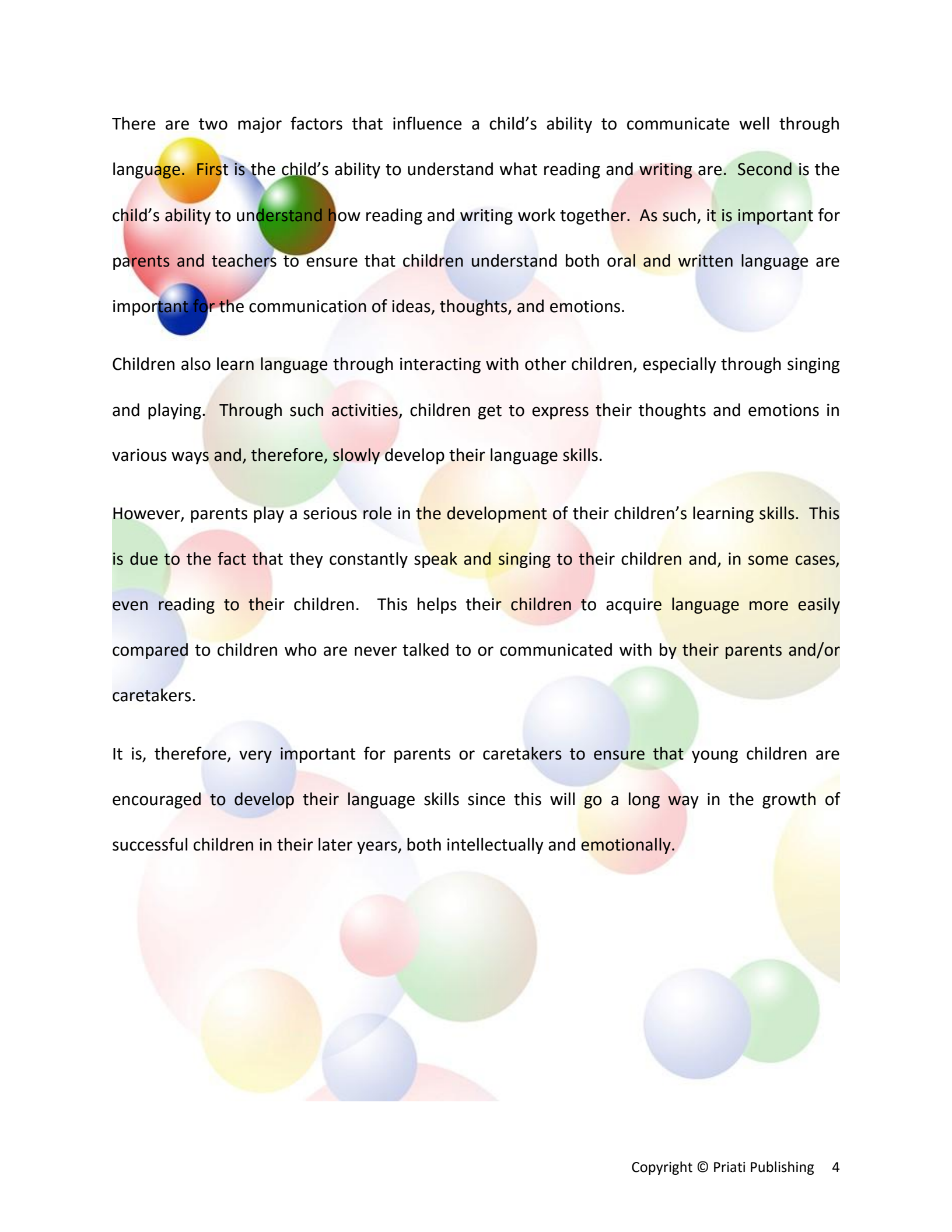
While still young, children tend to learn language through a number of fascinating experiences. These experiences are inclusive of the use of both written works and visual works in several learning contexts such as: focused learning and teaching, involvement in learning experiences in play, real-life situations, routines, and transitions.<sup>5</sup> Through constant observation and regular interactions with adults and other children, young children get an opportunity to learn language.

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<sup>3</sup> Smith, A.B. (1999). The role of an early childhood curriculum: Promoting diversity versus uniformity. Paper presented at Enhancing Quality in the Early Years Conference, Dublin 19-20, November, 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Rogoff, B. (1990). Apprenticeship in thinking: Cognitive development in a social context. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>5</sup> Queensland Studies Authority (2006). Early Years Curriculum Materials. Language learning & communication: How children learn to use written language. Retrieved from [www.qsa.qld.edu.au](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au) last accessed on 26<sup>th</sup> August, 2016.



There are two major factors that influence a child's ability to communicate well through language. First is the child's ability to understand what reading and writing are. Second is the child's ability to understand how reading and writing work together. As such, it is important for parents and teachers to ensure that children understand both oral and written language are important for the communication of ideas, thoughts, and emotions.

Children also learn language through interacting with other children, especially through singing and playing. Through such activities, children get to express their thoughts and emotions in various ways and, therefore, slowly develop their language skills.

However, parents play a serious role in the development of their children's learning skills. This is due to the fact that they constantly speak and singing to their children and, in some cases, even reading to their children. This helps their children to acquire language more easily compared to children who are never talked to or communicated with by their parents and/or caretakers.

It is, therefore, very important for parents or caretakers to ensure that young children are encouraged to develop their language skills since this will go a long way in the growth of successful children in their later years, both intellectually and emotionally.

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