It can be very challenging figuring out the next steps in programming for a child who is at level three or higher on the VB MAPP. I recently got a question from a member of my online community about how to teach higher level language skills to kids that are conversational or almost conversational. Hi, I'm Dr. Mary Barbera, autism mom, Board Certified Behavior Analyst, online course creator, and bestselling author of The Verbal Behavior Approach. Each week I provide you with some of my ideas about turning autism around so if you haven't subscribed to my YouTube channel you can do that now. Today I'm sharing a small excerpt from a recent live Q and A session giving you ideas on what the next steps are in programming for kids who are at level three or have completed the VB MAPP teach to them more conversational skills and to have them be able to functionally communicate with you and others.

Amy said, can you please give your thoughts on when and how to best introduce inferences? Our son is seven and almost completed the VB MAPP. I feel pretty strongly, Amy and I, I love your questions cause they're always uh, really spot on. I think you might be a professional in the field too if my memory's correcting corrected. But um, so I get really nervous when behavior analysts try to program for kids that are past the VB MAPP or at the top of the VB MAPP because, um, it, when kids get into level three, um, and beyond, I feel pretty strongly, um, that you need to do language for learning. You need to follow curriculum like he's seven. So you know, he's still, if he's still within the VB MAPP, that's a four year old, so still significant delays and I would do more, uh, language for learning when you get all of that done, and a lot of our kids need pullout. So the, the intermediate learner course on language for learning, those language for learning kits are expensive new. Um, you might be able to go on to eBay, like I did get a get a set for, you know, a couple of hundred bucks. Um, and I would just systematically go through that. And then once that's done, language for thinking and once that's done language for reasoning and writing. And I don't even, you know, trust, trust, I, I'll say that with quotes like speech pathologists are better at teaching inferences then behavior analysts. I could assure you that that's the case. I still would be concerned about trying to teach something like inferences in any rote manner. I would also really highly recommend that you, um, look at the book program. You did have another question that you didn't put under the graphics, which, which is right under here.

So I'm gonna add to that answer as well. So, um, she's, Amy is also looking for her seven year old who is ready for inferences to compile a list of wh questions plus other questions that would relate to the material in language for learning program. Has anyone already compiled such a list? Would like to use a prompt for me, uh, for use during the reading program. So I'm not sure if that means you have purchased or gotten the language for learning program or if he’s at school, school can do it and should do it and that should be part of his IEP. Um, but you can't, in my opinion, just get lists of questions, get lists of inferences and teach it like you would teach opposites within a discreet trial intensive teaching setting. It's just not gonna work. It's gonna lead to really, um, some, some messed up language.

And I've had a lot of success with Lauren who's in a lot of the intermediate learner course videos and the book program videos. Um, I've had a lot of success with her. Another little boy who was almost exactly her age and grade, um, a little bit different functioning level. I didn't have, I'd never got, um, video permission or permission to even discuss his case, so I won't. But, but they were both in like, well, I had the one child from two on. Um, and then I had Lauren from four or five on and they were both in, you know, first grade struggling to get through language for learning. They were both in language for thinking. The boy actually ended up doing, uh, going much quicker and got into language for writing and reasoning before I transferred. They were my last two clients, but you know, a seven year old we’re, we're talking about inclusion if he's in school. We're talking about reading and math, but the reading of math really be based, should be and needs to be based on the language and if you don't fix the language now that is going to have major implications. So I remember with the boy, I'll call him at Adam, um, with the boy that flew through eventually. Um, and he did another program called fast forward, uh, which really helped him. I remember being in an IEP meeting when he was like in first grade and they wanted to stop language for learning or thinking, whatever he was on then. He was trying different computer programs. He was having problems. They, the school was just like, he's fine. Let's just include him. Let's stop the language for learning. That doesn't seem very functional. And I was like, listen, I mean I had this kid since he's been two.

He had was non-vocal when I started. Now he's conversational, kind of sorta like lay, in my opinion, language for learning was the most important part of his day. And I'm like, listen, he could go either way. He can either go be a kid that ends up in college or he can be a kid that ends up in life skills and needs support for the rest of his life. That's how strongly I felt at that point. And of course nobody has a crystal ball. It was probably even inappropriate that I said that, but I was just like, you cannot stop language for learning. And mom ended up getting an advocate and he ended up getting a one to one and we, he ended up flying through fast forward, which, you know, really were, I mean, I wasn't, I had no idea about fast forward, um, but it really helped him click and, and he was just doing so much better.

Um, but it's very individualized what kids need when they get to the top of the VB MAPP. And, um, I would just keep, you know, if you haven't watched the whole intermediate learner course, definitely I would, I would watch that. I would watch some of these, some of these bonus videos. And really, um, I would implement the book program, teach the school how to do the book program if he's in school, and uh, take it from there. I hope you enjoyed this short snippet. Wherever you're watching this. I'd love it if you would leave me a comment, give me a thumbs up, share this video with others who may benefit and for more information, you can attend a free online workshop at marybarbera.com/workshop. And I'll see you right here next week.