

SUPPORTING VOCABULARY

Vocabulary is all the words we know, understand, and use. We learn new words in two main ways: by hearing them and by reading them. Children can learn new words through talking and interacting with family, friends and at school and by reading storybooks together (Beck, McKeown, Kucan, 2013).



The importance of vocabulary

Research shows that a strong vocabulary is important for school success (McKeown, 2019). As children progress in school, they need to understand and use more complex words, including specific words for different subjects (e.g., science words like "organism" and "synthesis") and words that help explain what they need to do for assignments (e.g., "discuss," "explain," "define").



Practical ways to help your child grow their vocabulary:

Talk about word meanings

- Talk about new words your child hears. For example, if they hear the word "curious," explain that being curious means wanting to learn new things. You can write the word down, keep it on the fridge, and discuss it at the dinner table.

Use new words in sentences

- Encourage your child to make sentences with new words. For example, if the new word is "adventure," they can say, "We had an exciting adventure in the forest."



Explore word groups

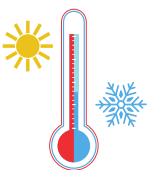
- Help your child see how words are related by grouping similar words. For example, if you're talking about "animals," discuss different types, like mammals, birds, and reptiles.

Learn similar words (synonyms)

- Expand their vocabulary by learning words with similar meanings. For example, for "happy," you can introduce synonyms like "joyful," "content," or "excited."

Learn opposite words (antonyms)

- Teach them opposites to deepen their understanding of words. For example, if the word is "hot," you can discuss its opposite, "cold."



Remember, building vocabulary is an ongoing process! Daily conversations, reading together, and playing word games are great ways to help your child develop their vocabulary.

References

Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G., & Kucan, L. (2013). *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction*. Guilford Press
 McKeown, M. G. (2019). *Effective Vocabulary Instruction Fosters Knowing Words, Using Words, and Understanding How Words Work*. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 50(4), 466-476