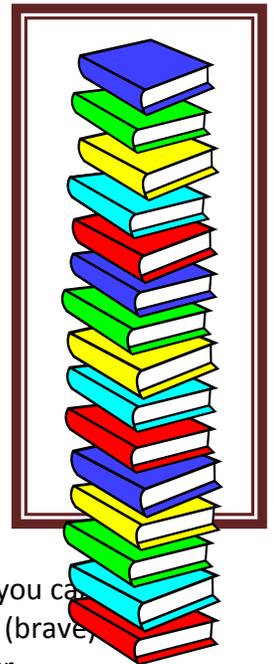


Promoting Vocabulary Development at Home

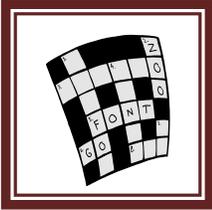
How can parents help promote vocabulary development?

1. Have discussions with your children and build on what they say. Talk about what your children are interested in which will provide motivation to speak. Check out their understanding. Encourage your children to ask if they have not understood.
2. Try to find and use new and interesting words. Exposing your children to new words is a great way to build interest in learning words.
3. Watch TV and use the Internet together. It's an excellent way to spark conversations and discuss new words and concepts.
4. Read to your children as often as possible. Choose books that are more difficult than they can read independently. Point out and discuss interesting words. Continue to read to your children even after they are independent readers because opportunities to hear stories above their reading level builds background vocabulary and expands vocabulary. Discuss interesting facts that you have read in the newspaper or a magazine.
5. As you take your children out and about, talk about what you see. Introduce new words as you visit the grocery store, doctor's office, and other locations.
6. Play a word guessing game to help your children think about words. 'For example, you can say, "I'm thinking of a word that starts with "br" and means that a person is not afraid (brave). If your child doesn't guess the word, provide more information to help. Help build your children's understanding of language by playing verbal games and telling jokes.'
7. Encourage your child to read as often as possible. Children who read more have larger vocabularies. Choose one or two interesting words as you read and ask 'Do you know what this means' when your child reads an unfamiliar word. This is critical to helping your child improve his or her reading comprehension.
8. Use technology with your children to keep in touch with distant relatives or friends. E-mail, send photos or even Skype to keep in touch.
9. Play oral word games to build your children's vocabulary. 'For example, play the opposite game where you say a word such as "inside" and ask your child to say a word that has an opposite meaning (outside). Or, you can play the synonym game where you say a word such as "happy" and take turns with your child saying words that have similar meanings.'



10. Tell family stories. Look together at family photos – can your child remember the story behind the photo? See if you can find a similar photo of when you were young and talk about the differences and similarities.

11. Word games such as Scrabble, Scrabble Jr., Upwords, Boggle, Boggle Jr., and Banana-grams help children focus on words. These games are available at most discount and toy stores. They are also available at some libraries. In addition, your children may enjoy doing crossword puzzles which focus on connecting words and meanings.



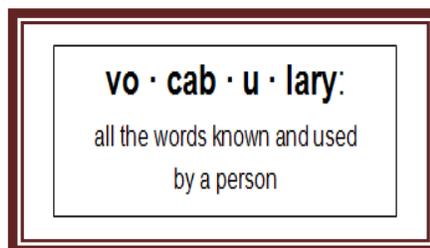
12. Play games on the computer together. Discuss interesting words. Try to use them again and again over the next few days.

13. If your child has vocabulary words to learn for school, first consider how your child learns best. If they learn best by seeing things, have them create a drawing for each word to represent its meaning. Or play the memory game by making 2 cards for each word. On one card, your child should write the word, and on the other card, he or she should write the word's meaning. Spread the cards out on the table, face-down. Turn over one card and then turning over a second card to try and match the word to its definition. If the cards don't match, your child should put them back and begin again. If your child learns best by listening, discuss new words and their meanings. Make rhymes or riddles to remember words and their meanings. If your child learns best through doing, have your child act out new words to learn their meanings.

14. Listen to music together as songs introduce new words. Music helps with learning languages and developing listening skills.

Promoting Word Consciousness

Word Consciousness is important to success in vocabulary development and reading comprehension. Help your children to notice and learn new words each day. By sharing a love of words and talking about new and exciting words, you are teaching your children to become Word Conscious. So when you notice interesting words, talk about them!



Information compiled from a variety of sources including The Ontario Ministry of Education, NIU Literacy Clinic, The Communication Trust, and Reading Rockets.