

Tips for Parents

Helping At Home With Vocabulary

Research indicates that the best way for learning new words is through direct experiences. The more experiences your child has, the richer his or her vocabulary – and life – will be. Reading to and with your child is an important part of these experiences.

Reading to your child helps to enlarge his or her concepts and vocabulary. It increase his or her knowledge of stories and general knowledge about the world. This can be helpful the next time he or she reads about that topic.

Take trips with your child and talk to him or her about what you're seeing and doing. The park, the zoo, the library, a public building, the supermarket, the pet store, the airport, a sports event, a nature trail, and a museum are all fine places to stimulate discussion and increase knowledge.

Do a project together; build something; plan a party. Discuss the steps involved in sequence, and do not talk down to your child.

Keep a dictionary next to the area where you and your children eat meals. Often a new word will come up in conversation. While your child may not be in the habit of looking words up in the dictionary, he or she will be only too delighted to have you look it up. Your child is the winner; his or her word knowledge grows.

Use dinner time to use new words deliberately. Explain the meaning of the word, and try to use it again later on so your child will remember it.

Sight Word Vocabulary

Sight words are words that your child recognizes instantly. The larger the store of sight words a child has, the more quickly and fluently he or she is able to read. The following activities will give suggestions for helping your child develop this vocabulary.

Writing vocabulary words on index cards for practice is one way of helping your child. Because we want to emphasize meaning in our practice, write an easy sentence on the other side of the card which uses the targeted vocabulary word. Underline the vocabulary word. This sentence could be one taken from a story summary, one dictated to you by your child, or one that you make-up using easy words. This will give you a meaningful sentence to be used for practice. As you practice, it's ok to read this sentence to your child. When engaging your child in any type of practice activity, it is important to keep the session short. This is especially important if frustration sets in.