

PARENT UNIVERSITY PRESENTS

What families need to know about ...



VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Vocabulary development is an essential part of the reading process. The development of vocabulary involves learning, using, and understanding new and familiar words. The ability to use words and understand their meanings is key to comprehending what is read. Children learn new words and their meanings in several ways:

- Naming and labeling common objects
- Looking at how and where the word is used (context clues)
- Observing relationships between words (categorizing by concept)
- Looking at the parts of the word (structure)
- Using a dictionary, thesaurus, or glossary (resources).

As children apply the meanings of words to their own experiences, they gain understanding of the words. Below are some activities to help build your child's vocabulary.

1. Encourage your child to identify unfamiliar words they hear or read. Use the methods described above to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words through the context, concept, structure, or use of a resource.
2. Help your child understand a new word by connecting it to their prior experiences or knowledge. (inference)
3. Sort words into groups by their relationships to each other (categorize). Example: animals, colors, seasons, and numbers.
4. As you read together, look for clues to new words and their meanings by observing how or where the word is used (context).
 - Look at any pictures that are available. Based on the pictures ask: *"What could the unfamiliar word mean?"*
 - Read the words before and after the unfamiliar word. Look for words that give clues. *"What could the unfamiliar word mean?"*
 - Read the sentences before and after the unfamiliar word. *"What could the unfamiliar word mean?"*

5. Help your child examine the parts of words (structure) in order to group them with similar words and gain meaning.
 - “*Are the words contractions?*” (can not = can’t)
 - “*Is the word a compound word?*” (dog + house = doghouse)
 - “*Is there a prefix?*” (anti = against, antibacterial)
 - “*Is there a suffix?*” (est = most, tallest)

6. Have your child keep a list of new words in a notebook. Review the words and their meanings and watch the list grow.

7. Use text features to help your child determine the meaning of new words. These features are informational aids used in a text to bring meaning to the concepts or ideas presented. Text features include:
 - Photographs and illustrations
 - Captions and headings
 - Charts and diagrams
 - Bold, highlighted and italicized text

8. Provide resources your child can use to find the meanings of new words:
 - Dictionaries
 - Textbook glossaries
 - Thesaurus

9. Encourage your child to use new words they learn when they speak and write. Make a point of using these new words when you speak with them.