

- Talk about how words are linked together and how they link to words they already know. They might be similar in what they mean (tall, high, long), or be words in the same group (cat, dog, hamster).

Extra tips for helping your child

- Encourage your child to use new words by giving them choices. You can do this when you're joining in with play during any activity. For example: 'shall we splash the water or pour it?'.
- Repetition is important, children need to hear new words up to 50 times before they learn to use them in context, so keep using the words you want them to learn.
- Actions can speak louder than words. Remember to use actions, gestures and facial expressions alongside words to help your child understand the meaning of words.

Most importantly, have fun with learning new words. Enjoy the precious time you have talking to your child and discovering new vocabulary.

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Vocabulary and your child in the Early Years

Helping to increase your child's vocabulary at home.



The Vocabulary Gap

A good vocabulary (the number of words you know and can say) is really important for all children. It is a crucial building block for helping children to talk in sentences and it's also really beneficial for learning to read. In fact, research tells us that a child's vocabulary at five years old can tell us how well they will do at school at 11. So, helping children to develop a good vocabulary is vital.

Knowing and using lots of different words is important when children are learning to read and write. They need to be familiar with a variety of words to be able to understand what they read, and to be able to make guesses when they can't understand. They work things out using the words they know. It helps children to be able to explain themselves to other people.

What can you do if I am worried about my child's speech, language and communication skills?

If you are worried or concerned about your child's language skills, speak to their key person at pre-school/nursery or contact the City

Child and Family Centre. City of London Early Years providers are dedicated to improving vocabulary and offer a range of interventions that can help your child to improve their speech, language and communication skills.

What can you do at home?

Learning new words is tricky. There are many things children need to be able to do to understand and say a new word and get it right. They need to remember the sounds they hear and the order they come in, they have to find a meaning for the word and then they have to work out where it might go in a sentence. There are lots of different things you can do to help children's vocabulary development. Here's just a few:

- Having a child's attention is important, so always say your child's name first and encourage them to look at you. Then say an object's name while showing it to your child. This will help them to learn and remember names for objects that they haven't seen before.

- Take part in imaginary play with your child, for example be the shop keeper and talk about your child's favourite food.
- Use actions and gestures to reinforce new words. Have you seen our Makaton Wednesday videos on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter?
- Singing songs and nursery rhymes together is great fun and a good way to improve speech and language skills. Talk about words that rhyme and explain the meaning of new words.
- Share books together, talk about the meaning of new words and what you can see in the pictures. It is important to read the same book many times, this will help your child learn new words and understand how stories work. Follow Coltale on social media (@SqMileFamilies) for exciting book suggestions and activities.