Vocabulary

Research shows that children who know and understand lots of different words become better readers. Building a strong vocabulary helps children recognize and read written words and later use them in their writing.

To help your child develop vocabulary:

- Talk to your child, a lot! Research shows that parents who talk to their children more often have children with larger vocabularies, and those children better understand what they read.

- Talk to your child about what is going on around you. Talk about how things work, feelings, and ideas. Listen when your child talks to you.

- Speak in the language that is most comfortable for you.

- Read to your child every day. Children’s books have more rare words than everyday conversations. Talk about the stories and the pictures in books.

- Learn together by reading nonfiction (true) books. Help your child pick out information books about the things he or she is interested in.

- When your child talks to you, add more detail to what she says. Expand the conversation and ask lots of questions.

Parents who talk to their children throughout the day are giving them a gift. The language they learn will help them enjoy and understand the world around them and help prepare them to become lifelong learners.

Featured Book

The Very Hungry Caterpillar, by Eric Carle

This all-time favorite not only follows the very hungry caterpillar as it grows from egg to cocoon to beautiful butterfly, but also teaches the days of the week, counting, and nutrition. Your child will want to read it again and again!

More books for building vocabulary:

(birth to 2 years)

Ten Little Fingers, Ten Little Toes, by Mem Fox
Planting a Rainbow, by Lois Ehlert
Ten Tiny Tickles, by Karen Katz
Bunny Reads Back series, by Rosemary Wells

(3 to 5 years)

A Huge Hog is a Big Pig, by Francis McCall
What Do You Do With a Tale Like This? by Steve Jenkins & Robin Page
Stellaluna, by Janell Cannon

(Grades K-1)

Chrysanthemum, by Kevin Henkes
Biggest, Strongest, Fastest, by Steve Jenkins
Caps for Sale, by Esphyr Slobodkina
More fun with *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*...  

**Science and nature**... What exactly is that caterpillar doing inside its cocoon? Help your child find out more about caterpillars by reading information books at your library.  

**Math connection**... Put several small fruits and vegetables on a plate. Ask your child to put the ones that are the same together in groups. Ask, “How many ____ (blueberries) are there?” Show your child how to touch each one as you count it. “Sorting” objects into alike groups and counting objects by ones are important skills for young children.  

**Around the house**... Post a calendar in your child’s room. Write down special occasions or appointments. Talk with your child each morning: “Today is Monday. It is a preschool day. Tomorrow is Grandma’s birthday!”

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**Action Rhyme**

Sunday, Sunday,  
Clap, clap, clap. (*Clap hands.*)  
Monday, Monday,  
Tap, tap, tap. (*Tap foot.*)  
Tuesday, Tuesday,  
Hop, hop, hop. (*Hop on one foot.*)  
Wednesday, Wednesday,  
Stop, stop, stop. (*Hold up hand.*)  
Thursday, Thursday,  
Jump, jump, jump. (*Jump on two feet.*)  
Friday, Friday,  
Thump, thump, thump. (*Pound fists together.*)  
Saturday, Saturday,  
Turn around. (*Turn around.*)  
Now smile quietly  
Without a sound! (*Sit down and smile.*)

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**Song**

"The Little Caterpillar"  
(Sing to the tune of "Itsy, Bitsy Spider")

The little caterpillar crawled up into a tree.  
Spun his cocoon and slept so quietly.  
All through the winter he didn’t make a sound.  
He dreamt of his new life when he could fly around.  
While he was sleeping the snow did gently fall.  
Winter came and went, then he heard the robin’s call.  
Come on, Mr. Butterfly, out of your cocoon.  
Spread your wings and fly for me, while I sing my tune.

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**What your library can do for you...**

Talk with your local librarian about nonfiction or “true” books that will match your child’s interests. You will have great fun reading and learning with your child.

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**Books to Go from Your Library**

This project is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services. Brought to you by the Idaho Commission for Libraries’ Read to Me program and your local library.