

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is one of the early literacy skills that researchers say is important for children to have in order to learn to read. The more vocabulary children have the easier it will be for them to understand what they are reading.

Vocabulary is knowing the names of things, feelings, concepts, and ideas.

Here are some ways you can develop or increase your child's vocabulary skills...



Babies...

Talking or singing

Even though your child cannot speak, it is important to talk with her. Children who are spoken to a lot during their early years end up knowing many more words than those who are not spoken to very much.

(Sing to the tune of "Do Your Ears Hang Low")

(Match actions to the words)

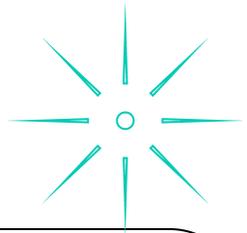
I have ten little fingers
And they all belong to me.
I can make them do things,
Would you like to see?

I can shut them up tight,
Or open them all wide,
I can put them all together,
Or make them all hide.

I can make them jump high,
I can make them fall down low.
I can make them clap loudly,
Or clap them soft and slow.



Toddlers...



Talking or singing

Having a large vocabulary and knowing the names of things is one of the skills children need later when they learn to sound out or recognize words.

Activity: Use the colored objects provided for each color as you sing the song with your toddler.

(sung to the tune of "The Hokey Pokey")

You put red in,

(hold red scarf/clothing and move arm away from you)

You take red out

(hold red scarf and move arm back towards you)

You put red in and you shake it all about.

(shake the red scarf)

You do the Hokey Pokey

and you turn yourself around,

(clap hands, turn in a circle)

That's what it's all about!

(Continue with additional verses as you use the other colored objects)



Preschoolers...

Building words

Having a large vocabulary and knowing the names of things is one of the skills children need later when they learn to sound out or recognize words. Books give us different words than those we use in normal conversations or that are on television.

Activity: Pick out a word from one of the books provided. For an unfamiliar word, explain it to your child. For a familiar word, think of a new word that has a similar meaning. Ask your child to help you think of words.

Examples:

Familiar words:

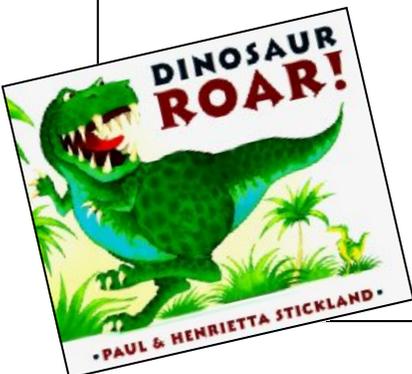
small= little, tiny

big= large, huge, enormous

Unfamiliar words:

Author= person who wrote the book

Illustrator= person who made the pictures



School-Age...

Building words

Having a large vocabulary helps children to sound out or recognize words. Books give us different words than those we use in normal conversations or that are on television.

Activity: Here is part of a story. Read it to your child. Then on the matching handout, ask your child to find other words that mean the same as the underlined words. How does changing the words make the story different?

Between the hours of 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., Skippyjon Jones created his finest piece of artwork ever. It went up and down and all around the newly painted hall. And this rubbed his mama's fur the wrong way. "Drop that crayon right now, Mr. Doodlepaws," commanded Mama Junebug Jones. "You're not the boss of me," said Skippyjon Jones. "In your dreams, Mr. beans," said Mama. "I cannot believe that in two quiet hours you covered the walls with those cockeyed Chihuahuas," she scolded. "You are not a Chihuahua. You are a naughty Siamese cat. And you need a time-out to think about that." The kitty boy did not budge.





From the story, *Skippyjon Jones in the Doghouse*,
by Judith Schachner

Between the hours of 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., Skippyjon Jones created his _____ piece of artwork ever.

(another word that means “finest”)

It went up and down and all around the newly painted hall. And this _____.

(another phrase that means “rubbed his mama’s fur the wrong way”)

“Drop that crayon right now, Mr. Doodlepaws,”
_____ Mama Junebug Jones.

(another words that means “commanded”)

“You’re not the boss of me,” said Skippyjon Jones.
“_____, Mr. Beans,” said Mama.

(another phrase that means “in your dreams”)

“I cannot believe that in two _____ hours you

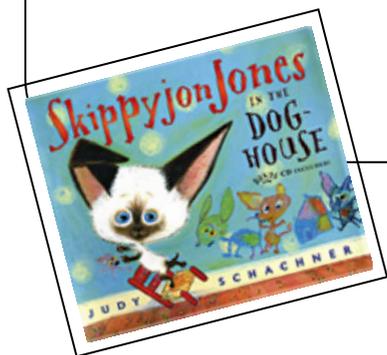
(another word that means “quiet”)

covered the walls with those cockeyed Chihuahuas,” she scolded. “You are not a Chihuahua. You are a naughty Siamese cat. And you need a _____

(another way to say “time-out”)

to think about that.” The kitty boy did not _____.

(another words that means “budge”)



Duplicate as needed

Center Instructions...

- Choose a variety of board books and picture books to set out.
 - Include books that have rich vocabulary.
 - Include non-fiction books.
- Set out a basket of solid-colored objects, such as scarves, blocks, bean bags, fabric, balls, etc., that can be easily held by toddlers. Include basic colors: red, blue, yellow, green, purple, orange, black, white, pink.
- Make copies of the Skippyjon Jones handout, or laminate one or two copies, and put with center card. Set out pencils or dry erase markers.

