



Developing Vocabulary with your child



The Oxford Language Report found evidence of a significant word gap in UK schools. The term '**word gap**' was first coined by in the **1995 Hart/ Risley** study that found children from low income families are exposed to **30 million fewer words** that their higher income peers before the age of 3.

This study and others have linked poor early literacy skills to **lifelong academic, social and income disparities**.

Top tips for developing vocabulary with your child

Make conversation a priority

- The quality of parent- child interactions is one of the biggest factors influencing vocabulary

Read together

- Everyday. Keep reading to your child once they can read independently. Reading more challenging texts enables you to explore vocabulary they may not have encountered before.

Use labels

- Label objects around the house using Post It notes. Begin to add words to describe the objects to expand vocabulary further e.g. wooden table.

Play word games

- Games such as I Spy and Bananagrams are a fun way of helping your child to learn new words

Use words in sentences

- Model how to use new words in context and encourage your child to experiment with doing the same



Write for pleasure

- Children that enjoy writing are seven times more likely to write at the expected level for their age. Encourage them to write about things that interest them and don't get hung up on correcting their mistakes.

Create a word wall

- Collect new words on sticky notes or strips of paper and display them around the home.

Introduce a word of the day

- One new word a day adds up to 365 or 366 a year! You can use an app to generate a new word each day or pick it from a dictionary. Make sure your child knows the meaning of it and challenge members of the family to use it in conversation that day- make it a competition.

Play together

- Playing with your child is a vital part of language development. It helps them to learn the skills of communication.

Don't 'dumb down'

- Children's receptive language (what they understand) is more developed than their expressive language (the words they use to communicate) Don't over simplify the language you use with your child. A child needs to hear a word about 12 times for them to remember it.

Show them how to use a thesaurus

- Encouraging your child to look up alternatives for over used words can improve their oral and written vocabulary. Ask them to find as many alternatives as possible for overused words such as big, small, scary, nice

Make a big deal of language

- Create an environment where language is praised and celebrated. Congratulate your child on the use of a new word and praise them for trying to use new words in their speech or writing.