

The Gift of a Rich Vocabulary -

10 Ways to Build a Rich Vocabulary for Your Child

A strong vocabulary is one of the best predictors of future success in school and beyond. So, how do we as parents build our children's vocabularies? Building a vocabulary happens when we hear a word over and over. Hearing words spoken by important people in their lives provides a model for children to learn words they will use in their own speech. Hearing words used in conversation naturally in a meaningful context provides fertile soil for vocabulary to grow.

You may wonder how to build vocabulary beyond the same words we tend to use daily. Here are ten ways to increase the vocabulary use in your home.

1. Talk to your child, tell them stories, talk about things with each other as they come up naturally throughout your day.
2. Read Aloud to your children. Books will expose your children to new vocabulary in a meaningful way.
3. Encourage and provide daily reading time.
4. Challenge yourself to switch up your vocabulary and begin using words your child may not already know. Instead of saying, "little" choose to say "miniscule."
5. Keep the new word active in your home by using it intentionally throughout the day.
6. Play word games like Scrabble, Boggle, Word Bingo, Crossword puzzles, etc.
7. Encourage your child to write daily.
8. Increase the awareness of words and how they are used. New words are everywhere and new experiences can build vocabulary by exposing the child to different ideas. Visit the zoo, museum, grocery store, post office, etc. and see what new words you find.
9. When you come across a word that you don't know, point it out to your child. Describe to your child how you were able to determine its meaning by using context clues. By explaining this process out loud, you will help show your child what they can do when they come across an unfamiliar word.
10. Tell jokes, read poetry, sing songs and have fun with words.

Rich vocabularies create strong readers, writers and thinkers. Remember rich vocabulary is a strong indicator of school success and beyond!