

Reading for Success

Build your child's vocabulary

A large vocabulary will give your child a strong foundation for reading. Building your child's vocabulary is easier than you may think. Just by introducing new words and playing fun word games, you are setting the stage for reading success. Try a few of the ideas below:

Introduce new words

- **Use new words** when you talk with your child. Some parents avoid using words they think their child can't understand. But young children are captivated by the sounds of long and complex words. They want to use the "big" words adults use. So go ahead. Make some difficult words part of your regular conversation. Don't just say the weather is *cold*. Say it's *frigid*. Tell your child she's *delightful*.
- **Listen to music** with your child. Sing along to age-appropriate music in the car. Learning the words to songs is a great way to help build your child's vocabulary.
- **Pick higher-level books.** When you pick new books to read aloud, pick titles that are a few levels above your child's current vocabulary. Point out new words to her as you read. "This huge house is called a *castle*. Can you guess who lives in a castle?" That way, your child will always be learning new words and ideas.
- **Play pretend.** If your child is pretending to be a doctor, use the word *stethoscope*. If you are playing with trains together, teach your child *caboose*.



Play word games

- **Try "20 Questions" or "I Spy."** Using words to describe the object you're thinking of will boost your child's vocabulary.
- **Take turns giving each other a word.** Make up a story that uses that word. If the word is *apple*, the story might go: "I found an apple. I ate the apple. The apple was good."
 - **Act out opposites.** Say *high* and have your child jump. Then say *low* and crouch down. Yell *loud* and whisper *quiet*.

Make a word wall

Create a word wall with a pack of index cards, a marker and tape. Then:

1. **Ask your child to choose** 5 words from a favorite book or story.
2. **Write one word on each card.** Mount the cards in an easy-to-see place.
3. **Have your child pick one activity** each day to do with the words: Color the cards, trace over the letters or say them out loud.

After your child has learned these words, make a new set of cards using words from another book. Be sure to save the "old" cards for review.

