

Supporting Vocabulary Development at Home

Readers are Leaders

Vocabulary refers to the words we must understand to comprehend and communicate effectively. As a child's vocabulary increases, his/her ability to comprehend various forms of texts and conversations also increases. Below are some tips that can be used to ensure your child's vocabulary continues to thrive even when he/she is not in school.

Tips for Fostering Vocabulary Development:

- Ensure your child has a **library card** and regularly visits to check out books on various topics. **Students who read frequently and vastly usually have a more extensive vocabulary.**
- S/he should read every night for at least 15 minutes and after reading, summarize the key details and share newly learned words. If your child is too young to read, read to him/her each day. When the book contains a new word, take a moment to define and describe the word for your child. After you're done reading, engage your child in a conversation about the book.
- Encourage the reading of **nonfiction texts** (i.e. magazines, news stories, biographies, science articles, recipes, etc. Remember, many of these can be accessed online free of charge. Children are exposed to various terms when reading these texts.
- Have your child maintain a **vocabulary journal** where he/she can record new words while reading. The journal can include the following headings:
 - Vocabulary Term
 - Part of Speech and Definition
 - Sample sentence (The sentence should show an understanding of the term.)
 - A Visual of the Term (To support remembering the term's definition)
- In addition to the vocabulary journal, you could have your child create a **vocabulary word wall** in his/her room (or other part of the house) – where they post new words that they are learning. Be sure posting includes the definition and a sentence that shows understanding.
- Have your child create **flash cards** for some of the terms he/she is learning in school. For instance, in Language Arts, the list might include: character, setting, theme, idiom, personification, expository, etc. In science, the list might include: cell membrane, mitochondria, nucleus, kinetic energy, etc. They should practice learning these terms each day.
- Encourage **writing** at home. Children can write letters to their love ones, maintain a reflection journal, write summaries from their readings, etc. When they are writing, they should include examples of the new words they have learned.
- Engage your children in a lot of **rich discussions** about what they are learning, current events, their goals/aspirations, etc. Try to include new and interesting words in the conversation. When speaking, encourage your child to speak clearly and correctly and use their new vocabulary terms. *Parents are encouraged to use more precise words to model good vocabulary. For instance, instead of saying:
 - **messy** – the term *disorganized* or *disorderly* can be used
 - **talk** – the term *converse* or *communicate* can be used
 - **good** – the term *pleasant* or *tasteful* can be used
 - **big** – the term *tremendous* or *monstrous* can be used
- If your child has a Smart Phone, he/she can download **vocabulary building applications** (Apps.), such as: SAT / ACT Test Prep, Dictionary.Com, Vocab Rootology: Greek and Latin, Word of the Day Play, Flash Cards for the iPhone, Vocabulary HD, Kaplan English Vocabulary Builder.