

Vocabulary Boosters

Whether you are talking to your child about a new word, helping her write a letter, or reading a story out loud, your interaction will maximize your child's language understanding. Keep in mind the following vocabulary boosters as you go about your daily activities; even a few minutes each day will translate into measurable differences in your child's long-term language growth.



- **Change the language of your daily routines.** Rather than say, "It's time to clean up" every day, try to introduce other rich words that help describe this routine, such as "organize," "collate," and "arrange."
- **Bond with your child through language.** In our busy world, several minutes of "real" conversation are incredibly valuable. A car ride chat that focuses on where you are going or things you see along the way, a bath that explores things that float or sink, or a bump or a bruise that elicits talk about feelings and healing are all terrific opportunities.
- **Use writing and drawings.** Repeat what your child says as she shows you her artwork and then build on and extend it. For example, if your child has created a drawing and written, with invented spelling or otherwise, "I like rain," you might say, "I like rain. Oh, yes. I see all of your raindrops here and a puddle. What is it about rain that you like? This puddle looks like it would be fun to splash in."
- **Read aloud.** Put as much expression as possible into your reading. When you come to a word that is sophisticated, draw it out. Take the word "scrumptious," for example. Say it slowly as part of the sentence and then add a comment like, "Scrumptious. Hmm, that means really, really good. Look at that apple pie. It sure looks scrumptious to me." You can also look for instances in which a challenging word is repeated in a story. Call your child's attention to it each time it appears. Use the pictures to help build a deepening understanding of the word's meaning.
- **Share your own stories.** Talk to your child about your own day: what you did, different people you encountered, funny things that happened, anything interesting that you might have seen. Find ways to use memorable words in your daily conversations. This way, your child will hear them in a different context and outside of a book.