

Developing Your Child's Vocabulary

Pick a few words that are "sophisticated" language that you child is likely to see in multiple situations.

Examples:

Cozy
Connect
Delight



Define the words using everyday language.

Examples

Cozy-comfortable
Connect-to put two things together
Delight-to make very happy.

Use the words in everyday situations. Exaggerate the word.

Examples:

Your teddy bear is warm and cozy.
I can't connect the Legos.
I am delighted with how you have put away your toys.

Use the word over and over again. It takes anywhere from 6 to 20 times of using a word till they have really learned it.

Look for words you might focus on as you read aloud different books to your child.



Other Family Tips

The best way to help develop your child's vocabulary is to read aloud to them. Talk to your child constantly. Children learn language and increase their vocabulary in only one way — listening to the people around them.

Encourage family discussions. Turn off the TV and talk. One of the best places is the dinner table. Set up some ground rules, such as "No eat and run," and "Everyone will have something to talk about" during and after supper. It's a kind of "hear and tell" time.

"Word of the Week" is a family game-like activity. Each person selects a word taking turns each week. For example, the first week it might be mom who writes a word on a card and puts it on the refrigerator door. Everyone must use that word as much as possible that week. The next week it's dad's turn, and then the children's turn, and so on until it is mom's turn again. As the words are used, they are posted on a cabinet door to stimulate continued use.

Show and tell. Whenever you go somewhere, collect something to bring back. Have a show-and-tell time when the family is together. Give your child the floor to tell about his treasure. These special objects need not be expensive or elaborate. The important part is sharing information and experiences.