

Oral Language & Vocabulary

What is oral language?

Oral language or spoken language is one of the ways we communicate with one another.

How do we develop oral language?

- Children learn oral language through their environments. They learn from modeling and engaging with conversation partners. Caregivers, when you talk with your child, you help them develop listening and conversation skills as well as allowing them to practice their language knowledge.
- Building oral language helps to build their vocabulary, develop background knowledge, and get your child interested in reading.
- Conversations, engaging in language play, listening to books are the primary ways of acquiring oral language skills.



What is vocabulary and how do we acquire vocabulary?

Vocabulary refers to the words a child understands and uses in order to communicate whether it is speaking, listening, reading, or writing. Vocabulary is acquired over time through continued exposure and practice with words. Our daily activities offer many opportunities to practice learning new words from grocery shopping to reading books together.

How can I help my child with their vocabulary/oral language?

1. **Talk to your children** using different and interesting words
2. **Intentionally teach** words and meanings of words
3. **Read books** with your child and ask questions about the story
4. **Have regular conversations** modeling language
5. **Explore!** Go outside, visit a museum, go to the grocery store... our environment is full of rich language opportunities to expand your child's vocabulary and oral language
6. **Sing songs** to expand your child's vocabulary. Create songs to describe your daily activities such as brushing your teeth or getting dressed.
7. **Play "I Spy"** with your child using words that describe an object's position. ("I spy something in front of the chair, on the desk, next to the book.") Another game is playing "Simon Says" using directional words. ("Simon says put your hand behind your head.")
8. **Spend some time** every night discussing your activities from the day. Introduce new vocabulary words by elaborating on the day's activities.