

Developing Vocabulary and Strengthening Word Retrieval

- When introducing new vocabulary, relate it to information your child already knows.
- Use appropriate words for whatever you are talking about. I.e. Bottle is bottle, not baba. Even though your child may not yet be able to say the actual word, the modeling provided should always reflect the actual word.
- Ask questions to get answers other than "yes" or "no." This gives experience with vocabulary use.
- For new vocabulary, try to provide visual cues or associations when possible. For example, "yes, a glacier is like a frozen waterfall like in our backyard."
- Provide the initial sound of the word you think the child/student may be seeking.
- Play with synonyms (like words, ex. yummy and tasty) and antonyms (opposites, ex. bad and good).
- Try to help your child visualize a concept. Give them words to picture the new vocabulary within their heads.
- Play category games where you name as many members of a category as you can. Talk about similarities and differences among the members.
- Present categories for children – creating the 'files' for their brains to organize. Ex. A tiger is an animal, right, but what kind of animal? Where does a tiger live?
- Name parts to objects. (What are the parts to a pizza? To a car? etc.)
- Talk about multiple meaning words. For example, 'fan' may mean a machine or a person who loves a particular sport or an action to keep oneself cool.
- Give ample models and examples. Typically words need to be heard 10 – 40 times before they are learned.
- Illustrate words – drawing pictures or actually seeing objects or representations of words helps to secure the meaning within the brain. The more modalities or ways to develop understanding, the better the memory.
- Children with word retrieval difficulties often quickly use words, such as 'thing', 'thingie', 'thing-a-ma-jig', 'doodad', and 'doo-hickey'. When this happens, push for the accurate word of description. Perhaps you can help by providing words you think might be the target. Have the child repeat the correct word when it is found.
- As you introduce new words, be sure to give as many synonyms for the word as possible. This will increase the vocabulary bank within the brain.
- Create sentences using new words as they are learned. Using the words within a sentence reinforces memory.
- Play word games – there are plenty on the market, such as Pictionary, Scrabble, Scattegories, crossword puzzles, etc. Replace TV one night a week with a family game night. Get everyone involved and

HAVE FUN!

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