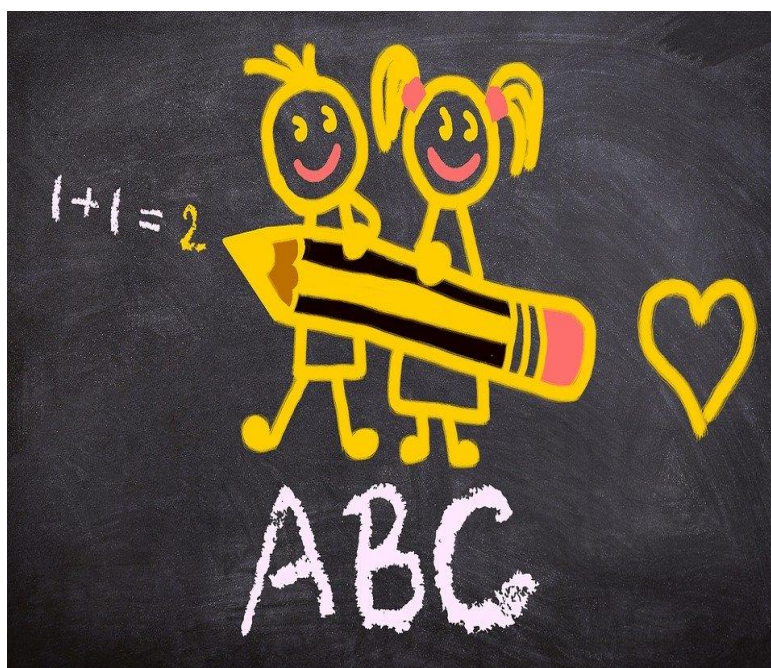


# Developing Vocabulary Skills

## *Activity Ideas for Home*



Section A	Using Opportunities to Learn New Words at Home	Pg. 2
Section B	Teaching New Words 1. Choosing words to teach 2. Steps for teaching new words	Pg. 3 & 4
Section C	Reinforcing taught words at home using 'Talk Time'	Pg. 5 & 6

## Section A: Opportunities to Learn New Words at Home

### 1. Reading:

Reading to your child is a great way to support indirect vocabulary learning, as they will hear familiar words and how to use them in context. If you come across a new word, you can use this opportunity to teach the word and/or support your child to use his/her own word learning strategies.



### 2. Watching TV:

The same applies when watching TV.

TOP TIP: Pick a set amount of time only to work on words when your child is watching TV. Otherwise they may become frustrated. You can name what you are watching on TV. Bring up what you were watching in conversation at a later stage in the day.



### 3. Using Apps and Websites:

There are many apps and websites available to increase exposure to new words and support word learning. The NCSE have created a list of apps and websites for your convenience <https://ncse.ie/online-resources>.



Word Aware have a YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCC-DHl-cwCpP5rFM6QzZ3rg>. This channel has songs and raps that your child can sing along with and add their new words to.

### 4. New Experiences

Get your child involved in new experiences that you can do together *e.g. baking, gardening, arts & crafts, even tidying up*. These present opportunities for exposure and use of new words *e.g. recipe, whisk, trowel etc.*

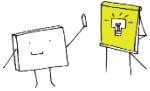


### 5. Play

Research has shown that play stimulates language development and that children often use higher forms of language when playing. All forms of play, either with other children or adults, increases exposure to words and promotes new word learning.



## Section B: Teaching new words



### 1. Choosing words to teach

Children learn lot of words indirectly. However, some words need to be taught directly. This is even more important if your child has speech, language and communication needs as they may find it more difficult than peers to learn words indirectly.

Direct instruction helps children learn difficult words, such as words that represent new concepts that are not part of their everyday experiences.



#### What words do I choose?

**Words your child almost has** – You might notice your child using a word or phrase that accurately describes something but is not the exact word, *e.g. saying ‘dinner shop’ while meaning ‘restaurant’.*

Teaching a word your child almost has should be straightforward as they already have some understanding or information about the meaning of the word.

**Words child shows interest in** – The questions ‘what’s that?’ is a good indicator that your child is interested in the word. Make a note of the words your child shows interest in. Make a commitment to teach them in the moment or a later stage.

**Words provided by school** - Your child’s teacher may be providing key words or core vocabulary for your child to work on during this time. These are important words to teach as they will be selected to support your child accessing the school curriculum.

**Words which help them to understand other things** – When playing or working with your child at home, you may need to explain new concepts to them, for example, when baking you might say ‘first let’s make the batter’. Your child needs to understand the word batter in order to grasp the concept of making a cake.

**WOW words** – ‘Wow’ word are adventurous and exciting words. They are words that come up often in conversation, during play or reading that could be made more exciting, *for example, the word ‘good’.* If you notice your child using the same descriptive words over again, you could teach them more exciting varieties that mean the same thing, for example, ‘brilliant’ or ‘excellent’.

***Include your child in the process of selecting words as much as possible.***



## Section B: Teaching new words at home



### 2. Steps for teaching new words

Robert Marzano proposed six steps for vocabulary learning.

**Teach one new word at a time and approximately 4 per week.**

**Step one:** Explain the new word, going beyond just giving definition. Use pictures and demonstrations to explain the word. Make connections between the new word and words the child knows already.

**Step two:** Encourage your child to explain the word back to you or to other children (verbally and/or in writing).

**Step three:** Ask your child to create a representation of the word by drawing a picture of it or creating a word map. Or perhaps you can make this drawing together.

**Step four:** Engage in activities to deepen their knowledge of the new word (compare words, words that mean the opposite, examples and non-examples of the word).

**Step five:** Encourage your child to discuss the new word with other children or adults

**Step six:** Play word games to review new vocabulary. For example, create your own Headbandz game where the new words are in a pot, your child pulls out a word and must explain it without saying the word, or guess the word when you explain it.

*These words should then be included in every day conversations to provide multiple exposures to the word in a variety of contexts, see Talk Time – next page.*

## Section C: Reinforcing taught words at home using ‘Talk Time’

### What is ‘Talk Time’?

‘Talk Time’ is a planned and structured way to help to develop your child’s knowledge and use of words.

### Why is it important?

Science and research tells us that the **amount of words** and the **types of words** a child knows is very important because it:

- Increases the store of words they understand and can use
- Makes it easier for them to communicate, explain how they feel and play with their friends
- Makes it easier for them to succeed in school with school-work, speaking, reading and tests



### How can you help?

- Select some target words as described on the previous page and practice using these words through **spoken (oral)** language. Four words each week from Monday to Thursday, is a good starting point. You may need to increase or decrease the amount depending on your child’s ability. Remember it is quality not quantity that counts!
- **Repetition** of the target words is a very important part of ‘Talk Time’ because this helps children to practice and learn words.



### Example of a plan for the week – You can choose your own words and topics to discuss

Day	Target Word	Topic to talk about for 10 minutes
Monday	Gather	What does gather mean? How would you gather? Types of things you can gather? E.g. squirrels gathering acorns; gathering money for charity.
Tuesday	Obsess	Being obsessed with sports, a band, other things?
Wednesday	Repeat	Doing something again, saying something again, having to repeat yourself. Who has to repeat? Why?
Thursday	Hilarious	Something extremely funny, what things do you find very funny?

## Ideas for practicing the words

### When?

- Practice **any time** you have when you can talk together with your child, this might be during homework time, at dinnertime, in the car or when on a walk or a set time to talk 1:1 with your child..
- Remember to try to **use this new word lots of times** with your child so they can hear it repeatedly.

### How?

- ★ Stress or emphasise the new word when you are chatting
- ★ Ask your child to explain what the word means to you
- ★ Explain the new word to them
- ★ Give them examples of words that mean the same thing or the word in a sentence
- ★ Ask them to give you an example or talk about the word

## Practice could look something like this:

### Target Word = Hilarious

