



Speaking

Building vocabulary (learning and using single words)

Children are like sponges, so it's important to immerse them in language right from the start and expose them to different words such as:

- Names of things/ toys/ body parts/ animals (e.g., lunch, ball, face, dog)
- Actions (eat, sleep, jump)
- Describing words (big, little, hungry, cold)
- Feelings (happy, sad, angry etc.)

To help children learn and use new words, you can:

- **Play word games:**

NAMES

- **Feely bags** (pull toys out of the bag slowly at a time and encourage your child to name them. If he doesn't know the name, say it for them.

You can put different objects or organize them by categories (e.g., food, body parts, toys, objects) or sort them out (e.g., put all the food items in a shopping bag, the toys in a basket)

Mr. Potato



This game can be played within a small group. Put Mr. Potato's body parts in a bag and let the children fish them one by one and insert them into the body; it's a great opportunity to identify and name body parts in a fun way

- **Lotto games**

- **Inset puzzles** (vehicles puzzles, animal farm etc.). Hand the pieces to your child one by one and label them. Alternatively, you can offer a choice of two to support your child saying the name of the one he wants.

- **hide and seek** (hide toys around the room and send your child to find them. Show and label the toys you're going to hide to your child beforehand so that they can tell you what they have found. If they cannot do it say the word for them)

- **Tidy up games** (encourage your child to name their toys as you tidy them away or take them out)

ACTIONS

- **Action songs**, for example 'If you are happy and you know it', or 'This is the way we ... wash your face, comb your hair, brush etc. (sing to the tune of ' Here we go round the Mulberry bush)

-Action cards

- mime and act out actions (a simple charade game to encourage your child to copy you)

- Use toys and make them do different actions

Use favourite toys and make them do different actions (e.g., eating, seating, jumping, sleeping) and talk about what they are doing in short sentences (e.g., “teddy is jumping”). Allow lots of repetitions and encourage your child to do the same while keeping saying the action the toy is doing.

DESCRIBING WORDS

You can introduce describing word with:

-objects (e.g., toys of different size to show big/small)

-instruments (to listen to a loud/quiet noise)

-food (to taste sweet/sour)

-touch (to feel cold/ warm)

-books (e.g., ‘Dear Zoo’ by Rod Campbell. Animals are described as ‘big’, ‘tall’, ‘jumpy’ etc.)

-games

‘What’s in the box’ game



-Use an open cardboard box and make 2 holes in it
-Select some objects with different shapes, texture and function such as a fork, a soft toy, a brush, a sponge, and play dough or slime (you may show the objects to your child first so that she/he can see them before starting the game)

Put an object inside the box. Let them guess what it is just by touching it. Give them some hints, for example what the object feels like, what colour it is, what do we use for etc. (e.g., if it is an apple, you can say “it’s red”, “it’s round” “you eat it”). When your child becomes familiar with some objects, swap role and ask them to put an object inside the box. Pretend you don’t know what it is (They may repeat some hints they heard from you)

• Share a story with your child

Sharing and enjoying a book with your child help them develop language skills; when you read a book, you can point and label people/animals and objects, you can point out what a person or animals are doing, and you can describe pictures.

For younger children prefer simple books with lots of pictures and very little writing. Pop up books, books with sounds or textures or with lifting flap windows can be very motivating (e.g., Dear Zoo by Rod Campbell)

As your child language skills develop you can use more complex books and ask your child to anticipate some events, ask some questions about the story or their personal experience.

To find out more please check [Stories section](#).

Moving from single words to sentences

‘The quality of adult-child interactions is one of the biggest factors influencing vocabulary, so it’s vital to talk to your child and expose them to different words. All the words seen above can be modelled by you when you play with your child or during routines and everyday activities

‘Try naming objects, using actions words, and introducing words that describe things or explain emotions: the more words your child understands, the more he/she will be able to use.’ Once your child understands and use single words you can extend what they say and help them forming short sentences. Here are the steps you need to follow:

1) Model single words



- Model words at any opportunity by naming the things your child points at / is interested in / plays with / is doing in his play.

If your child is playing with the tea set, say the words of things they are using (e.g., ‘cup’) or doing (e.g., ‘drinking’). You can also model some describing words (e.g., ‘Big’/‘small’ by showing cups of different size or

the word ‘hot’ by pretending to blow on the teacup so that your child understands the meaning the meaning of the word)

If your child is looking at a book or sharing a book with you points out at

2) Extend language (model simple sentences by adding a word)

If your child is already using single words, extend his/her language by helping them form short sentences.

To do that, repeat what your child says and add one word.

e.g. if he/she says “car” you can say ‘big car’ or “driving car”

if he/she says “mummy eating” you can say ‘mummy eating apple’

3) Comment on what your child is doing

Play with your child and comment on what he/she doing to provide simple sentences they can copy; your child is likely to understand better and use language that is related to things that he/she is playing with.

For example, if your child is playing with the farm animals and is making animals doing something you can say: "what is the cow doing? Oh yes cow is eating" and "dog is eating" and "look, horse is sleeping".

You can also offer ideas by setting a small world and leaving around props that can help your child extending his play (e.g., a cup, a plate, some food toys a piece of fabric that can be used as a bed)

If your child says a short sentence such as "dog is eating" help them to form a full sentence:

You can say: "the dog is eating a....." and wait to see what your child say

If your child say something repeat the sentence : "yes the dog is eating a biscuit"

If your child doesn't say anything offer alternatives: is he eating a biscuit or a banana?

And then repeat the full sentence: the dog is eating a biscuit.

(remember to speak slowly and stress the words)