

HELPING YOUR CHILD BUILD ACADEMIC VOCABULARY AT HOME

Talk to your child as much as possible during the day. Hold conversations about everything from the weather to the food you are cooking. Simple conversations are one of the most important ways to expand your child's vocabulary. Ask, "What do you think ____ means?"

Substitute alternate words for the common words you use each day. Describe a building as gigantic instead of big, or call the car an automobile. Explain to your child that both words mean the same thing.

Expect your child to answer questions in complete sentences instead of one-word answers.

Read books to your child that include new vocabulary words. Avoid a book with too many words your child doesn't know, or he may have difficulty understanding the story. Stop reading and give a brief definition of new words.

Talk to your child about what you are doing. Use technical words, such as sauteing while cooking dinner, followed by a child-friendly explanation of the word.

Create a Vocabulary notebook:

- Write the term

- Write examples, descriptions, or explanations of the term

- Draw or find a picture of the term

- Review the notebook on a weekly basis

Make a homemade matching game to practice new vocabulary words for older kids. Write each vocabulary word on two different cards to make pairs. Turn over the cards and have your child turn over two cards at a time, trying to find a pair. Ask her to provide the definition of each pair she makes.

Word of the Day

- Give your child an Academic Vocabulary word or two of the day

- Encourage him to research the word using the internet, library, or household books

- Have your child present the information during dinner that evening

Pictionary

- Write vocabulary words on index cards

- Draw a card. Using paper and a marker, illustrate word for the rest of the group to guess. Do as many cards as you can before the timer goes off.

Active family engagement is a critical component as you work with school. Parents are a child's first teacher. The most important thing you can do is read to your child. Reading books to children introduces them to a wide range of vocabulary that they may not hear in their everyday conversations with adults and peers.