



SUPPORTING VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Vocabulary develops through the expansion of the core vocabulary. Vocabulary development requires experience of the old words that can support the learning of new words, and this can be done monolingual children **AND** Multilingual children and the activities can be done in one or all languages. Just stick to one language each time you do an activity so your child can hear the correct grammar and sentence structure for the language you use at that time.

Those children who have difficulty retaining new vocabulary will need to hear the new words often, have visual cues and experience to recall them and have the opportunities to practice using the new words. Ways to support your child doing this are outlined below.

1) Topic words

People learn words better when they can relate a then to a past experience. This can be done by learning words in topics. E.g. 'Transport' Ask your child to think of as many things you can travel in as possible, you could also ask them to look through a book or search the house / classroom for things from that topic area. Once you have found a selection of items you can discuss where you would find it, e.g. boat in the water, car on the road etc. who uses them e.g. car – you do, tractor a farmer and when they use them, e.g. car – to get to school, go to the shops... train to go on holiday, etc.

2) Scrap Books

Make a scrap book with your child using pictures from magazines and newspapers. You could have a page of 'transport' another of 'food' and one on 'animals'. As your child becomes more confident with this you could have sub topics, e.g. in the sub topics of animals you could have 'pets', 'farm animals' and 'zoo animals'. You can also discuss where else you might find an animal, e.g. an elephant might be found in the zoo, in the jungle or in Africa. Discuss what it might feel like and how big it is, what it might eat etc.

3) Categorising objects

Take a selection of items from two or three topics e.g. cars, trucks etc for transport and cows, pigs, dogs etc for animals. Ask your child to put them in two groups. E.g. put all the ones with wheels in one pile and all the ones with legs in another. Your language can vary depending on the abilities of the child, e.g. transport = things with wheels, things you can travel to school on, etc and animals – things with legs, things you can pet, things that breath, animals, farm animals etc. You can make a game of this – you each hide a category of items and then find the other persons group of items. First person back wins. You can keep to hiding the items on the table, under boxes etc or using the whole room, depending on how much time you have and how many objects there are. Talk about what you have found and why it is in your group of items.





4) Feely bag

Put a selection of objects into a bag – use items that your child is familiar with and unfamiliar with. The familiar objects will increase your child's confidence. Take it in turns to pull out an object without the person seeing it and describing it to the other person. See if your child can guess what it is. If this is too hard, try telling him at the start that it is, either the ____ or the ____ - you'll describe it and he has to wait and tell you which one he thinks it is.

5) 'I Spy'

Put a selection of items on the table in front of you. This game is a bit like 'I spy' but instead of saying, 'It's something beginning with...' You say its big, feels soft, you cuddle it, you might find it in bed, the word begins with 't' it's a ...'

6) Mind maps

For children who have started reading, you might like to draw a mind map (see below) of new words. Put the word or a picture of the object in the middle of the piece of paper. You need to then use a selection of colours to talk about the object. Use a different colour pen for the different topic areas, e.g. **Blue** – what it's made from,

Green – What it's used for e.g. eating,

Red – the group it belongs to and other items from that group (e.g. food – bananas, apples, chocolate)

Black – What it feels like / what it tastes like

Orange – What it looks like

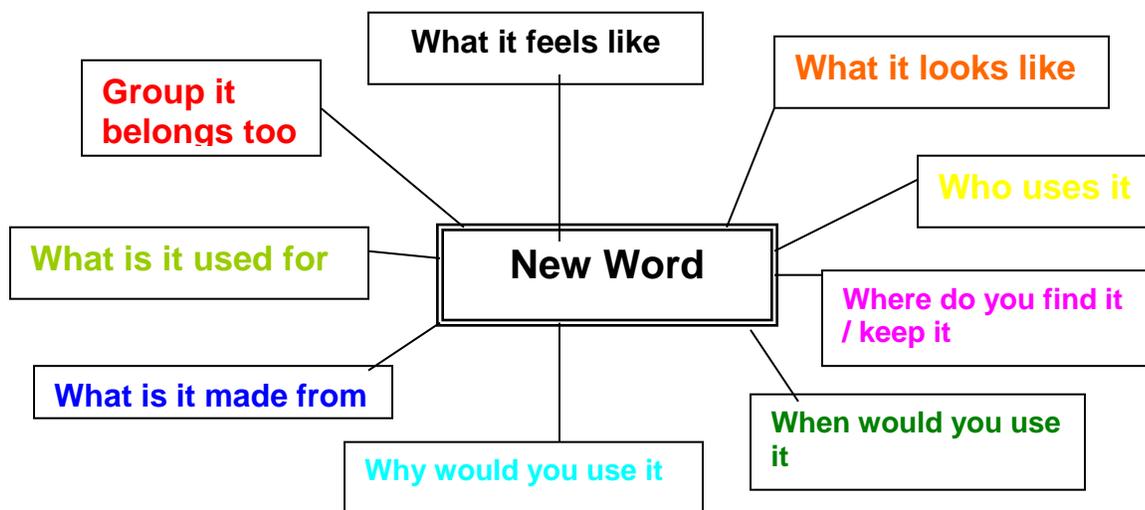
Yellow – Who uses it?

Pink – Where do you find it / keep it

Dark Green – When would you use it?

Light blue – Why would you use it?

NB Not all these categories can be used for all the items





7) Supporting school vocabulary at home

Develop a home/ school book that both the school and home can write new words in that they've introduced with the child. School will probably focus on the key words from the part of the curriculum that is being taught that term. At home, the activities suggested above can be done with the words that school have suggested in the book.

8) Extending the use of the words

Together at home and in school you can practice using the new words in sentences and stories. You can use the mind map questions to support this.

Most of all, have fun talking and playing with your child.

