

Learning Language and Words

Expressive Language



Receptive Language: children's ability to comprehend words – even before they have the ability to describe them.



Expressive Language: children's ability to say and produce words – describe and explain.

Expressive language plays a big role in children's ability to communicate with others. As children are learning to regulate their emotions (decide how they should react to events and how to express themselves) they will need the skills and tools to do so.

Activities to Promote Receptive and Expressive Language

Sound Recognition

- Play a recording for your child with different sounds he or she can recognize. Have your child notice differences between the sounds and try to identify them using a variety of words to build your child's vocabulary.
- Play a song and listen to it with your child. Talk to you child about the feelings that he or she might get when listening to the song. Did the song sound happy (up tempo) or sad (slow tempo)? What did you think about when you heard the song?

Sign Language or Gestures

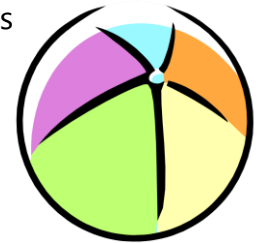
- Try incorporating sign language or gestures. Children learn that for each sign, there are gestures and a word. Using gestures can help children understand the connection between a specific word and an action. Helping children begin to understand body language also helps them identify that emotions are connected to the body.



Reading Stories

- Provide opportunities for your child to retell parts of the story or to describe the pictures he or she sees. This builds expressive language and allows you to check your child's understanding.
- Keep books and magazines on hand for your child to look at and to read with adults; encourage your child to make up and tell his or her own stories.
- Talk to your child during everyday activities. Describe objects, events, and feelings. Listen to your child's responses, as this is how expressive vocabulary is developed.
- Stop often to discuss the book being read. Make an effort to use a variety of words to describe common traits. If your child observes a big ball, make an effort to describe its size in other words, such as *large*, *gigantic*, and *huge*, to teach that all these words have a similar meaning.

"Big ball... large ball... huge ball..."



Word Find and Story Telling

- Matching games can help with the development of vocabulary words, particularly when your child needs to match objects with pictures, pictures with printed words, or even categorize the objects/words and use the word in a sentence.
- Play word games with your child. Make up nonsense rhymes, sing nursery rhymes, and make up new words. Your child will likely find it amusing while developing language skills at the same time. Learning happens more easily when it's fun!
- Encourage your child to tell stories or relay events. The more your child talks about the things that happen to him or her, the more language skills are developed.

"Tell me about..."

