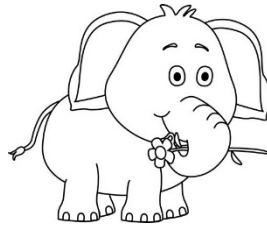


# Teaching Vocabulary

When children hear an unfamiliar word, they don't just automatically know what it means and then how to use the word in conversation. They first have to learn what the word means, before they begin to use the word in their conversations. It helps to hear the word used several times and often they will ask questions as they learn its meaning.



Having a large vocabulary is one of the building blocks to develop good literacy skills. When a child begins to read they not only have to be able to sound out words, they then use their vocabulary knowledge to work out what the word means.

Here's a strategy to help teach children new words:

## Shoot for the SSTaRS!!

S: Stress the new word. Use your voice to draw attention to it.

S: Show your child what the word means. Use facial expressions, gestures, a picture or act it out.

T: Tell your child what the word means. Describe the word and give specific details about it. Talk about what category the word belongs to

and

R: Relate the word to your child's experience or something they are familiar with. This helps your child link the word to other words they are already familiar with and expand their current knowledge.

S: Say it again

You could also try replacing common everyday words with more sophisticated words. Children tend to come across more sophisticated words in books. For example, replace *tired* with *exhausted*.

If you're concerned about your child's speech or language development, contact a speech pathologist to discuss whether assessment for your child is indicated.



Here's an example:

## Elephant

**Stress:** oh look at the elephant!

**Show:** See the elephant in the book. He's eating the leaves. We can pretend to be a elephant (use your arm as a trunk!)

**Tell:** an elephant is an animal that lives in the jungle, but we can also see them at the zoo. Elephants are really big animals that have four legs, a tail and a long trunk.

**Relate:** Remember when we went to the zoo how we saw the elephants there? They were sleeping in the sun.

**Say:** Let's see what else the elephants are going to do in this story!



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