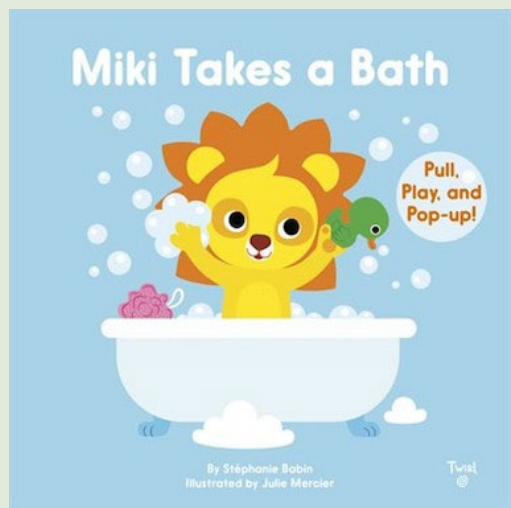


Book Nook

This month's Book Nook topic is...



Building Early Vocabulary with *Miki Takes a Bath*

It's never too soon to introduce books to children. At first, very young children may be interested in looking at the colourful illustrations, lifting flaps, turning pages, or even simply opening and closing the book! As their attention and interest in books increases, so do the opportunities to expose children to new words.

In this Book Nook, we'll share a fun strategy for building early vocabulary – a key emergent literacy skill for preparing young children for school success.

Let's get started!

Why this book was chosen:

This simple book features a Lion named Miki going through the steps of his bath time routine – a routine that is very relatable to young children. Each page of the book offers tabs that a child can pull to animate the story. For example, one tab pulls Miki out of the tub, while another animates Miki scrubbing his tummy. Not only do the moving illustrations actively engage children, but they also highlight rich vocabulary:

- **Action words stand out** – When we think of building vocabulary, we often think about nouns (object words like “tub”, “soap” and “towel”). But it's important for children to learn a variety of word types so that they have all the building blocks to form sentences when they're ready. This book offers many action words that really come to life when the tabs are pulled. Words within the text such as verbs like “scrub”, “wash” and “get out” are highlighted. Although the word “pull” is not found directly in the text, this word can also be emphasized as each page offers a tab to pull on, bringing the story's action to life!
- **Illustrations demonstrate the words** – Simple illustrations where the text does not dominate make it easy for children to focus on the pictures and understand what's happening. In this book, each illustration clearly demonstrates a verb, which helps children understand it.

More reasons why this book works well:

- **The child is actively involved** – Using interactive books with flaps or tabs is an excellent way to engage young readers. In this book, each page offers an opportunity for the child to actively participate in the story.
- **The book is relevant to children’s lives** – This book is all about a daily routine that children are highly familiar with: bath time! New words introduced in this story can therefore be modelled again during bath time in real life. The more often children hear the same word in different situations, the more likely they are to understand and later use the words themselves.

Introducing new words and making them “sparkle”

Children need a strong **understanding** of a word before they can **use** it meaningfully. When introducing new vocabulary, words that are interesting to children and those that can be used at other times throughout the day are a great place to start.

The next step to help children learn a new word is to make it “sparkle” or stand out. In Hanen’s ABC and Beyond™ and I’m Ready!™ guidebooks, we talk about making new words sparkle with a strategy called “Shoot for the SSTaRS”. It’s an acronym that stands for: **S**tress, **S**how, **T**ell and **R**elate, and **S**ay it again.

Here’s an example of how you could “shoot for the SSTaRS” in *Miki Takes a Bath* with the word “scrub”:

Stress

Make the word stand out from the other words by saying it louder and slower than the rest of the text. You can also highlight it by pausing before and after saying the word. For example, “Time to wash my mane. I need to...**scrub!**”

Show

The next step is to show a child what the word means. You can do this as you (or the child) animate Miki scrubbing using the pull tab. You can also demonstrate the word yourself as you say it (for example, scrub your own hair as you say the word).

Tell

This is when you explain to a child what the word means. You might say, “**scrub**” is when you wash back and forth using soap”. It can also be helpful to explain a word by saying what it is not. For example, you can say, “Miki doesn’t get clean by just putting soap on. He needs to **scrub back and forth** to get clean.”

and **R**elate

Relating the new word to other concepts or experiences that are familiar to children will make the word more meaningful and help children associate the word with other situations. You could relate “scrub” to how a child takes a bath themselves or to other experiences by saying things like, “Miki needs to **scrub** his feet the same way you **scrub** your hands after painting” or “Just like the car got **scrubbed** when we went to the carwash.”

Say it again...!

This is another essential step to help children learn new words: repeat the word both by re-reading the book, and by saying the word again in other situations. If a child likes *Miki Takes a Bath*, chances are they'll want to hear it again and again. This will give you many opportunities to shoot for the SSTaRS with "scrub". You'll also want to use the word in different situations throughout the day – for example, you could talk about how you scrub your hands with soap before meals so that they're nice and clean for eating.

Tips for re-reading the story

- Once a story has been re-read and a child is familiar with a word, you will not need to **stress** and **show** the word as much but can spend more time **relating** the word to the child's experience to deepen their understanding of the meaning.
- As you revisit the story, try pausing and waiting before the word "scrub" to give the child an opportunity to fill in the blank. Be sure to acknowledge any look, gesture, sound, or word as the child's attempt to fill in the blank. After they take a turn trying to use "stomp", you can say "**scrub** my foot". This provides another opportunity for the child to hear the word.

The more times you read the book, the more "shooting for the SSTaRS" you can do! Over time, children will understand (and eventually use!) many of the words in the book.

Happy reading!