



Build Children's Everyday Vocabulary

Children's vocabulary grows when they participate in conversations and hear new words. To help a child understand a new word, use strategies to highlight the word – e.g., say the word a bit slower and louder, pair it with a gesture and explain what it means. Here are some fun things to try in everyday situations:

Play Time

When building with blocks, use a new word – like **balance** – to talk about what the child is doing. Then, briefly explain what it means. You could say, “You’re so careful to **balance** that block on top. **Balance** means keeping something steady so that it doesn’t fall over!”



Daily Activities

When getting ready to go outside, wait for the child to say something. Then, use a new word related to their idea. If they say, “Look at my mitts!” you could say, “Your mitts are so **cozy**! That means they keep your hands warm.” Try to repeat the word again during the conversation – e.g., “My hat is **cozy**, too!”

On the Go

On the bus or in the car, use a new word when you respond to the child. If they say, “It’s raining!”, you could say, “Yes, it’s pouring! **Pouring** means it’s raining very hard!” If they make another comment – e.g., “It’s banging!”, try to use the word again: “Yes, the **pouring** rain is banging on the window!”

Book Reading

Highlight a new word while looking at a book with the child – e.g., the word **wriggle** is used in *Dinosnores* by Sandra Boynton. Pause before saying the word, then show and explain what it means – e.g., “**Wriggle** means you move your body around. Let’s **wriggle** our fingers, like this! Wriggle, wriggle!”



Notes