

# GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING VOCABULARY

## General Notes

1. Some children have difficulties in developing their vocabulary i.e. their understanding of what words mean.
2. New vocabulary is best taught as it arises during the day. In this way, the natural context is available and it is more meaningful to the child. It is important to consider keywords coming up in lessons. The child may need extra reinforcement of these words.
3. Some vocabulary, particularly abstract vocabulary, needs to be taught more formally. In this case, words are better taught within a specific semantic category, e.g. 'disappointed', 'furious', 'joyful' are all 'emotion' words. In this way, category names as well as the relationships between words can be addressed.
4. Example semantic categories are: Animals, food, clothes, toys, transport, furniture. Also more abstract words such as attributes and emotions need to be addressed.

## Activities

Some activities / games which can be used are outlined below:

### 1. Odd one out

Give the child 4 words ? e.g. chair, bed, apple, table (use pictures or objects). Which one is the odd one out and why (discuss category names).

### 2. Name the category

Give the child 4 words ? e.g. apple, pear, peach, banana (use pictures of objects).

"What are these? You may need to help by giving the child a choice ("do you think they are fruit or vegetables?")

### 3. Think of Three

Can you name a specified number of pieces of furniture, fruit etc e.g. think of three fruits (increase the number of items according to the child's ability).

### 4. Twenty Questions

### 5. Give me a Clue

"What am I?" (put an item or picture in a bag) "I'm a fruit, I'm soft and I'm yellow .....

### 6. "I went to market and I bought a .....

One person says one item within a specific semantic category, e.g. 'carrot', the next

person remembers 'carrot' and adds another, e.g. "I went to the market and I bought a carrot and a cabbage" etc. Also, "I went to the seaside and I saw a..... "I went in the garden and I saw a ..... etc.

#### 7. Looking Game (3 people +)

Choose a semantic category. One person starts, names a word and looks at someone else. It is then their turn to think of another word and look at someone else.

#### 8. Opposites

Give a word and see if the child can think of the opposite. (Can include prefixes, e.g. obedient/disobedient, etc.)

#### 9. Homonyms

Think of words that sound the same but that have different meanings e.g. sale/sail

#### 10. Crosswords

#### 11. Chinese Whispers (3+ people)

Person at the back of line whispers a word to the person in front and so on. Person at front finds the right picture, or gives the meaning of the word.

#### 12. Pirates

Choose several different word categories and place them in different parts of the room. It will be useful to use a picture to symbolise a particular category.

Caller gives a word and child runs to right category. Last person or wrong decision means he/she becomes the caller.

#### 13. Make a sentence.

Child makes up a sentence including one of the words being learnt.

#### 14. Make a story

Child makes up or continues a story so as to incorporate one or several of the words being learnt. The word could be in picture or written form.

Remember when talking to the child to occasionally monitor his understanding of the vocabulary that arises.