

Key principles to help your child learn words

- **Words are important**

An understanding and use of a wide vocabulary is needed to succeed at school and in life.

To progress with reading children need to understand the words they decode. To write well they need a wide and varied use of words. To understand all subjects including maths, science and social studies they need to understand the words that are used.

- **Home support for vocabulary makes a difference**

Children will learn words at school, but if they also come across these words at home they will learn them faster and better. Home and school working together gets to a place neither can on their own.

- **Have fun with words**

By playing with words children are also learning about words. We all know that children learn best when they are enjoying themselves. You do not need fancy games or gadgets to develop vocabulary; you just need a little conversation. Anyone can do that.

- **It is about talking as much as reading and writing**

Speaking and listening are the foundation skills for reading and writing. If your child has the word in their spoken vocabulary it is much easier to understand when they come across it in reading. Expose your child to spoken words as well as supporting their reading.

- **When talking about words, use comments more than questions**

To learn a word your child needs to hear it lots of times first. Use the target word in conversation so that your child hears you use it. If they use the target word, notice and say "Well done". Avoid just asking, "What does that mean?" because if they are still learning the word this will put them under pressure and may put them off.