

Talking Counts!

Most words in a child's vocabulary come from everyday encounters with language. Children pick up language from books, media, and conversations with the people in their lives.

You can increase your child's vocabulary and background knowledge—two important pieces of the reading puzzle—by having conversations with them. Giving children a rich language environment is one of the best ways to build a foundation for reading success.

With babies:

- Talk to them about what you're doing so they can begin to connect words with concepts.
- As your baby begins to speak, start asking, "What's that?" when pointing to objects or pictures. Elaborate on their simple answers as a way to have them listening to more words. "Yes, that is a banana! It's yellow and smooth."

With young children:

- Talk about the things you see in your neighborhood, on trips around town, or on television. These conversations help build a child's understanding of her world.
- When reading, pause to ask questions or comment on the story. Ask, "Why do you think he did that?" or "What do you think is going to happen next?"
- Use interesting and new words with your child. For example, "This cookie is *scrumptious!* It is really good!" or "I can see you're *reluctant* to leave, but we can come back tomorrow."
- Tell your children stories from your own life, or about the day they were born. This helps develop their personal and cultural identity.

*It doesn't matter what language you use—
a rich language environment creates better readers!*

For more ideas to help your kids build vocabulary, visit:

www.ReadingRockets.org/article/5136

Visit our sister sites, ColorinColorado.org and LDOnLine.org, for more information about learning.

