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## **Tips for developing Oral Language with your child**

**"Oral Language is the child's first, most important, and most frequently used structured medium of communication. It is the primary means through which each individual child will be enabled to structure, to evaluate, to describe and to control his/her experience. In addition, and most significantly, oral language is the primary mediator of culture, the way in which children locate themselves in the world, and define themselves with it and within it."**

**(Cregan, 1998, as cited in Archer, Cregan, McGough, Shiel, 2012)**

Oral language skills include being able to speak clearly and understanding what others are saying.

An effective way to build oral language skills is simply to talk with your child about what he or she is seeing and experiencing. As you do, discuss the colour, size, shape, or other qualities of the things you are talking about, and encourage your child to contribute to the conversation. For example, instead of asking, "Do you see the dog?" ask, "Do you see that little white dog with the long, fuzzy ears? What is he doing?"

Choose books with interesting pictures, and in addition to reading the words in the book, discuss what can be seen in the pictures (again, look for opportunities to use descriptive words).

Television, websites all offer content that can also contribute to a child's oral vocabulary, but there are a few things to be aware of when selecting appropriate content for a young child:

1. If the *words* of a TV program don't have a clear connection to the images being shown, then they will probably not contribute to oral vocabulary development.
2. The *pace* of a TV program should not be so fast that the child does not have opportunities to make the connections between what he is hearing and what he is seeing.

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In all cases, keep in mind that listening is just half of oral language development—the more time your child spends *talking* about these experiences, the more he or she will learn from them.

We develop cognitive abilities through language- using newly learnt words orally helps with comprehension- this is important for children of all ages.

### **Infants - 1st Class**

- Listen to what your child is saying/trying to say and respond to contributions
- Make and maintain eye contact while talking with your child
- Explain the meaning of words
- Talk through activities
- Talk through everyday experiences
- Involve your child in discussions/plans
- Ask/ Answer questions
- Teach your child nursery rhymes/songs/poems/raps
- Develop your child's receptive language by asking him/her to follow simple instructions
- Assist your child to express ideas in an orderly fluent way
- Read to your child each night

### **2nd - 4th Class**

- Set aside 10 - 15 minutes to discuss the day's happenings
- Encourage your child to express and justify opinions
- Involve your child in adult conversation when appropriate
- Talk about the child's favourite T.V programme
- Play language games which focus on words i.e. Scrabble, Crosswords
- Encourage your child to talk about experiences with a wide range of people: peers, relations, other adults
- Listen carefully and clarify meaning: "Do you mean/or is this what you mean?"
- Encourage your child to give reasons for decisions
- Encourage your child to listen courteously to the opinions of others
- Talk about school topics and assignments

### **5th and 6th Class**

- Encourage your child to develop a positive attitude to speaking/listening
- Discuss your child's school work successes/concerns/interests
- Respect your child's opinions and feelings
- Involve your child in adult conversation, when appropriate
- Help your child to extend his range of words in specialised subjects
- Encourage your child to listen and respond courteously to others
- Watch and discuss T.V. news/current affairs programmes together
- Assist your child to locate information in local library, internet
- Talk about school topics and assignments
- Play commercial games that focus on word building

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