

Conversations and vocabulary games to try at home



Whatever your child's reading ability, enjoying a book together allows them to develop their understanding, as well as to learn lots of new and exciting words. Read to your child whenever you can, ask them to read to you, or take turns reading pages or chapters of a book. Public libraries are a fantastic resource for allowing children to borrow books for free (and often have storytelling sessions and other craft and activity sessions in those long school holidays!).

Talking with and listening to your child teaches them the importance of spoken language and supports them in developing their vocabulary. When chatting with your child, try to avoid asking too many questions, but let them hear your own thoughts; children need to hear language in order to use it themselves. When you do ask your child a question, it is ideal to ask an 'open' question – one that cannot be answered with a single word. For example, 'What was the best thing that happened today?' rather than 'How was school?', to which the inevitable answer is 'Fine'!

Here are some more suggestions:

- 'I felt cross today because ... What makes you feel cross? Why?'
- 'I felt happy today when ... What made you feel happy today? Why?'
- 'If you had a superpower, what would it be?'
- 'What would you take to the moon?'
- 'Which book/film/TV character would you like to meet? Why?'
- 'Let's imagine it snowed tomorrow. What would we do?'
- Play I Spy where one player says, 'I spy with my little eye something beginning with ...' and makes or names the first sound or letter at the beginning of the name of something near them. The other player(s) try to guess what it is using the first sound or letter as a clue.
You could also try 'spying' things that are different colours or textures.
- Play the game of 'I went shopping and I bought ...', where a player names an item, for example, apples, and the next player names this item and adds another, so players end up reciting a list. Play continues until a player can no longer remember all the items.



For more ideas, see:

<https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/advice-for-parents/fun-ideas-learning-at-home/>

For more information on why the word gap matters and how you can help your child to develop their vocabulary at home, see:

<https://blog.oxfordowl.co.uk/why-the-word-gap-matters-and-what-can-you-do-at-home-to-close-it/>

