

Helping Your Child Build Vocabulary

happy

Tell Me the Meaning

Vocabulary knowledge is strongly related to reading skill and school achievement. Children need to recognize and understand many words when they hear and see them. Children with big listening and speaking vocabularies have an advantage in learning to read.

Here is a fun way for your child to practice recognizing and learning words. Reviewing new words is an important way to learn them. We don't learn a new word if we only hear it once or twice. When it comes to vocabulary, repetition is key!

You might call this game, "Tell Me the Meaning." Knowing what words mean helps readers understand what they are reading.

When your child knows a word because it is part of her speaking vocabulary, she will be able to relate the printed version to the spoken version faster and more accurately. This leads to better comprehension. If your child doesn't have to stop and spend a lot of time sounding out written words as she reads, she can pay more attention to understanding what the sentence or passage means.

To play "Tell Me the Meaning," you will need some index cards or slips of paper, some dice, and something to keep score with.

Print your child's vocabulary words on the cards or slips of paper. These words may come from his teacher, or you could select new words from a book you are reading together. Place the cards upside down on a table or in a container, like an envelope or a paper bag.

Decide how many points it will take to win the game. You might start with 15 points as your target. The first player rolls one die and then selects a card. That player must say the word and either tell what the word means or use it in a sentence. If the answer is correct, that player earns the number of points shown on the die he rolled. Continue taking turns and choosing word cards. The first player to reach the target score wins the game!

After you've finished the game, take a few minutes to review and talk about any of the words that are unfamiliar to your child. Then, mix the cards up and try again!



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