

Tips to Build Vocabulary: Repeat Words That Match Your Child's Interests

1, 2, 3... Repeat, repeat, repeat!

Children need to hear a new word many times before they can use it on their own. When you repeat a word in different situations with your child, you give him lots of opportunities to understand and eventually use it.

Research shows...variety is key!

Your child needs to learn not only the names for things ("dog"), but also a variety of word "types", like action words ("jump") and describing words ("big").

Finding Words to Repeat

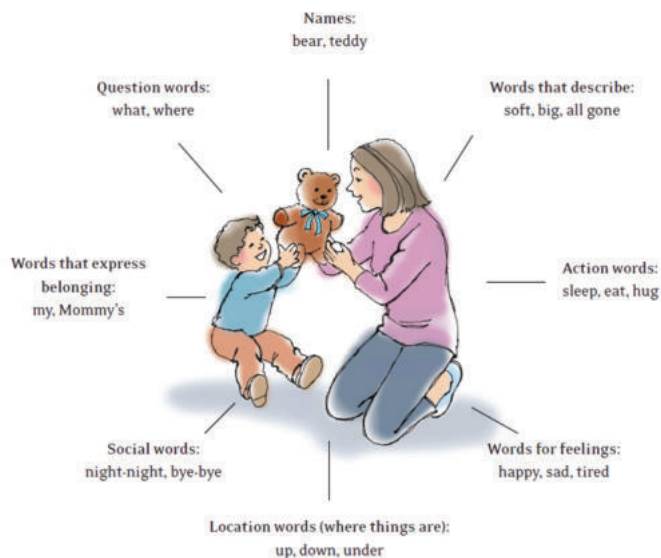
Look for words that:

- **match your child's interests** – words that relate to what your child is communicating about and what he's interested in at that moment.
 - *E.g., if your child is playing with cars by making them go down a ramp, you could repeat, "the car is going **down**".*
- **your child understands and communicates with actions or gestures.**
 - *E.g., repeat the word "up" if your child often raises his hands to be picked up, but doesn't say "up".*
- **you can use in a variety of situations.**
 - *E.g., "up" can be used not only when picking your child up, but also when he goes up the stairs.*

Word types to choose

The types of words you say should reflect what your child is interested in. For example, he might *run* or *jump* into a puddle, or he might show you that a page in his touch-and-feel book is *rough* or *soft*.

Here's an example of all the different word types you can use to talk to your child about a teddy bear:



How to repeat a word

Once you've identified a word that matches your child's interests, you can repeat it during fun, back-and-forth interactions with your child by:

- saying the word in a short sentence.
- emphasizing the word.
- saying the sentence slowly.
- using an action, a gesture or an object to show what the word means as you say it.

Example – How to repeat the word “down”

If your child is interested in pushing his toy car down the ramp, you could:

- say "Wheeee! The car went **down!**" when your child pushes the car down.
- emphasize “down” by saying it louder.
- say the sentence a little slower.
- show the meaning of “down” by pointing down to the car as you say the word.

Remember!

There should never be any pressure for your child to say the word after you – he will try to say it when he's ready!

Learn more at www.hanen.org/repeat

The tips in this handout are from the It Takes Two to Talk® Hanen guidebook. For more information about how you can build your child's language skills during everyday activities and conversations, visit www.hanen.org/ITTTparentguidebook

About The Hanen Centre

The Hanen Centre is a Canadian not-for-profit organization committed to promoting the best possible language, literacy and social skills in young children. This includes children who have or are at risk for language delays, those with developmental challenges such as autism, and those who are developing typically.

For more information, visit www.hanen.org.

