

Let's Play

It takes all kinds of words—big and small—to build a strong vocabulary. Enjoy these games and activities together as you help your youngster learn sight words, opposites, and more!



Sight-word hunt

Send your child on a scavenger hunt through picture books to grow his sight-word vocabulary. *Note:* Sight words are ones that appear frequently in a, for, now, or and. For a list, look online or ask your young child's teacher.)

You'll need six sticky notes for each player and several picture books to share. Write a different sight word on each note. Then, divide the notes evenly among the players. Each player goes to match the words on his notes with words in a book. Stick the notes on the pages, and the first person to get rid of all his notes wins—and reads the words aloud. Make more notes, and play again.

Antonyms and synonyms

It's easier for your youngster to understand the meaning of a new word if she can relate it to a word she already knows. Play with *antonyms* (opposites) and *synonyms* (words with the same or similar meanings) to expand her vocabulary.

Think of a word your child uses often, such as *huge*. Then, take turns rolling a die. If you roll an even number (2, 4, 6), say an antonym for the word (*tiny*, *minuscule*, *small*). If you roll an odd number (1, 3, 5), say a synonym (*colossal*, *enormous*, *big*). How many times can you go back and forth before you run out of words?

Alliteration alley

"Josh and Jamie did jumping jacks in the jungle!" Sentences with *alliteration*—or words that start with the same sound—

are fun to say and let your child use letter sounds to think of new words.

Have your youngster choose a letter (say, P). The first player gives a word beginning with the letter (*purple*). The second person adds a word that starts with the same sound (*purple pancakes*).

The next player adds another word (*peculiar purple pancakes*) and so on. A player is out when he can't think of a new word or remember all the old ones. Words may be added in any order—at the beginning or end of the sequence or anywhere in the middle. The last person in line gets to turn the words into a sentence. ("The pancakes are peculiar for penguins to prepare.")

Weave in words

The best way for your youngster to remember what new words mean is to hear them used in context. Everyday conversations offer a easy way to make this happen:

- In the car, talk about things you see, such as budding trees or tall buildings. ("Wow, look at the *buds*! It seems like yesterday the trees were *bare*.")

- Cook together, and use new words to discuss what you're doing. ("Please hand me the *colander* so I can rinse the blueberries.")

- At bedtime, ask about your child's day and tell what happened during yours. ("I had a busy day at work—the store was *bustling* with customers. What was your day like?")



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