



# Spring

Literacy Kit

2010

“Developing Young Children’s  
Vocabulary: Knowing the names of things”



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Created by the Early Literacy Specialist  
Ontario Early Years Centre – Leeds and Grenville  
For more information, please call 1-866-433-8933. Ext.2376

# What is “Vocabulary”?

Vocabulary is the ability to know the names of things. A good vocabulary helps children understand what they read and recognize words when they try to sound them out.

When we teach children new words, how to speak using the proper grammar, how to speak in longer sentences using details, how to rhyme and how to play with sounds in words, we are giving them the basis for a lifetime of reading.

**Early Literacy** is what a child learns before they can read or write.

It involves...

- reading together
- talking together
- creating a print rich environment
- playing literacy games & activities

This resource includes early learning activities, professional resources and songs and rhymes for families, classrooms and centres. Enjoy!



Early Literacy Specialist  
Ontario Early Years Centre – Leeds & Grenville

## **Why is it important for children to hear a wide range of vocabulary?**

Researchers have found that children with a large vocabulary find it easier to read. Research tells us that it is easier to read a word that is known to you.

Hearing lots of different words as well as concepts, feelings and ideas will help expand a child's vocabulary. The wider variety of words they hear, the larger their vocabulary will be and learning to read will be easier.

When you read with your child, it is important that you expand their understanding of the words on the page. This practice helps children develop their vocabulary, and helps them understand what they read.

### **Here are some ideas to use when reading with child(ren):**

- ✓ talk about the pictures
- ✓ describe what is going on
- ✓ ask questions about what is happening
- ✓ ask how they child feels about what is happening
- ✓ give time for the child to say something back
- ✓ name the pictures
- ✓ add descriptive words or adjectives
- ✓ talk about the sounds they make
- ✓ tell them something that is in the pictures
- ✓ offer an explanation on words they do not know
- ✓ use specific names for things (i.e.: cow and calf) to teach differences between similar things
- ✓ look for words that have the same meaning, or are synonyms
- ✓ look for words that are opposites or antonyms

# Progression of Language Development and Communication

	<b>Level of Language and Communication Development</b>
<b>Birth to 3 Months</b>	<b>Reflexive Communication</b> Simple, inborn behaviours; the infant communicates automatically.
<b>3 to 8 Months</b>	<b>Unintentional Communication</b> Repetition of simple accidental behaviours; the infant shows interest in others, but communication is haphazard, without intent.
<b>8-13 Months</b>	<b>Intentional Communication</b> Planned social interaction; the infant communication with purpose
<b>13-18 Months</b>	<b>Beginning Word Articulation</b> Experiment with known sounds. The infant created first words- 'cracks' the language code.
<b>18-24 Months</b>	<b>Two Word Sentence Communication</b> Organized, thinking behaviour; the child uses words to solve problems, imagine events; two word sentences begin.
<b>24-36 Months</b>	<b>Three to Five Word Sentence Communication</b> Continuation of planned thinking behaviour; child uses three to five word sentences in various situations.
<b>3 to 5 years</b>	<b>Complex Conversational Communication</b> The child uses long, complex sentence and can hold conversation. Child's language behaviours have matured; language used in all situations; long, complete sentences; child holds conversations.

# **Creating a Literacy Rich Environment**

Creating a “Literacy Rich Environment” is a way to encourage vocabulary skills. Label frequently visited items in the environment such as the fridge, bathroom, door, window, bookshelf, drawer, and toys. Place the child’s name in areas as well. A child has opportunities to learn the names of things when they are visible at their level. Encourage the child to touch and follow your finger under the letters as you read word.

## **Effective Reading Strategies (Dialogic Reading)**

‘Dialogic Reading’ or shared reading is a simple reading technique that you can easily use with child(ren). ‘Dialogic Reading’ helps the child participate in storytelling and is a great way to build an extensive vocabulary.

1. Ask “W” questions that have specific answers and that your child can easily answer. (What, Why, Where, Who, When)

For example, you may say “What kind of truck is this?”  
The child may answer “A dump truck.”

Respond with encouragement by saying “Yes, that is a yellow dump truck!”

2. Expand on the child’s answer. Your response should be something the child can repeat back to you that is short and simple.

“Yes, that is a yellow dump truck. It is carrying dirt.”

3. Add open-ended questions once the child is comfortable with ‘W’ questions. These types of questions require the child to use their imagination.

This sounds like “What if...”, “How did this happen?”

## Spring Book List

<i>In the Tall, Tall Grass</i>	Denise Fleming
<i>In the Small, Small Pond</i>	Denise Fleming
<i>Beetle Bop</i>	Denise Fleming
<i>Where Once There Was A Wood</i>	Denise Fleming
<i>Barnyard Banter</i>	Denise Flemming
<i>In My Backyard</i>	John DeVries
<i>Planting a Rainbow</i>	Lois Ehlert
<i>I Went Walking</i>	Sue Williams
<i>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</i>	Eric Carle
<i>The Tiny Seed</i>	Eric Carle
<i>The Very Busy Spider</i>	Eric Carle
<i>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</i>	Eric Carle
<i>Mrs. Wishy Washy's Farm</i>	Joy Cowley
<i>Tumble Bumble</i>	Felicia Bond
<i>Big Red Barn</i>	Margaret Wise Brown
<i>Cows in the Kitchen</i>	June Crebbin
<i>Jump, Frog, Jump</i>	Robert Kalan



# Spring Songs & Rhymes

Spring Song  
(sung to London Bridge)



Little ducks go quack, quack, quack  
Quack, quack, quack  
Little ducks go quack, quack, quack  
In the springtime  
(continue using sounds for other  
spring animals and creatures)

Fuzzy Wuzzy Creepy Crawly



Fuzzy wuzzy, creepy crawly  
Caterpillar funny,  
You will be a butterfly  
When the days are sunny.  
Winging, flinging, dancing,  
springing,  
Butterfly so yellow,  
You were once a caterpillar,  
Wiggly, wiggly fellow.

Butterfly Chant



Butterfly, butterfly  
Fly up high.  
Butterfly, butterfly  
Touch the sky.

Butterfly, butterfly  
Fly down low.  
Butterfly, butterfly  
Touch my toe.

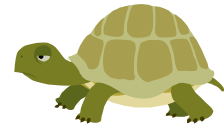
Fly up high  
Fly down low  
Butterfly, Butterfly  
"Way you go!"

One Little Flower



One little flower  
One little bee.  
One little blue bird,  
High in the tree.  
One little brown bear  
smiling at me.  
One is the number I like,  
you see.

The Little Turtle



There was a little turtle,  
He lived in a box  
He swam in a puddle,  
He climbed on the rocks.

He snapped at a mosquito,  
He snapped at a flea,  
He snapped at a minnow,  
And he snapped at me.

He caught the mosquito,  
He caught the flea,  
He caught the minnow  
But he didn't catch me!

# Vocabulary Activity Idea

Here is an activity that can be used to teach vocabulary to all age groups: toddler, pre-school, kindergarten and school-age children.

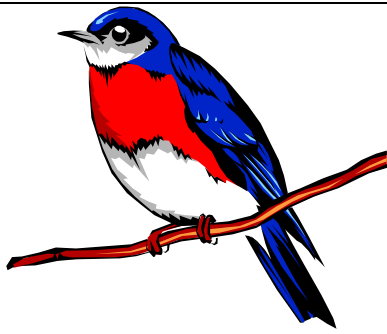
Using the pictures provided, have fun playing games and teaching vocabulary. These pictures can create further discussions with your children when going on walks and visiting parks. Matching, sorting and patterning are skills children need to be able to learn to read and write.

Note: Make many copies of these pictures to be able to play the ideas provided. To make these pictures sturdy, cover each one with Mac-Tac or use a laminator.

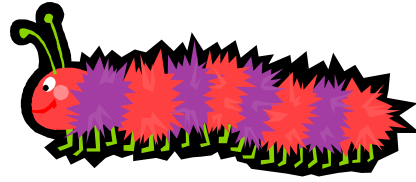
<b>Toddler and Pre-schooler (18 months to 4 years)</b>	<u>Matching</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the pictures that have the words underneath. Tape one set of pictures on a children’s table. Place a second set of the same pictures with words in a bowl. Encourage the child to pick a picture and find the match on the table. Say the name of the picture and repeat again after the child says the name.</li> <li>Hide one set of the pictures in a sensory bin using Easter grass and encourage the child to find a picture and match it to one taped on the outside of the bin.</li> </ol>
	<u>Sorting</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk about the pictures using categories. Help the child sort the pictures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• animals, bugs or reptiles</li> <li>• colours</li> <li>• walk, crawl, fly, hops</li> <li>• how many legs</li> <li>• wings or no wings</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
	<u>Patterning</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make a pattern and talk about what picture should come next. (An example is “rabbit, toad, rabbit, toad, ?.)</li> </ol>
<b>School age (4 to 6 years)</b>	<u>Matching</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the pictures with no words and the word cards to create a matching game. Set the pictures on a children’s table and encourage the child to find the word card that matches the picture.</li> </ol>



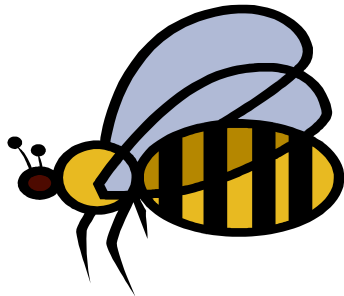
# Spring Pictures



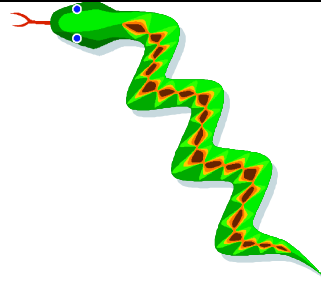
Bird



Caterpillar



Bee



Snake



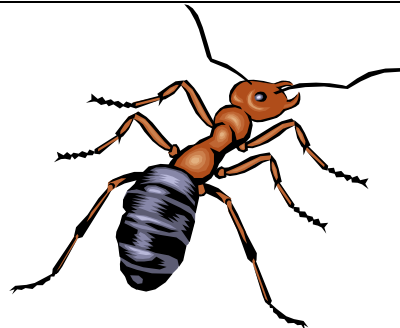
Beetle



Toad



Mole



Ant