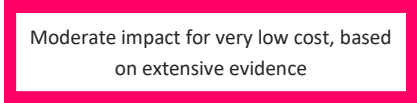


This toolkit investigates a lack of sophisticated language and vocabulary as an educational disadvantage faced by children

EEF evaluates the impact of oral language interventions on the outcomes of pupils as:



Approaches emphasising the importance of spoken language/verbal interaction include:

- All pupils appear to benefit from oral language interventions, but some studies show slightly larger effects for younger children and pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds (up to six months' additional progress).

The home learning environment contributes hugely to language and vocabulary development. Children raised in middle and upper-income homes are more likely than their less advantaged peers to experience a language-rich home environment. This means disadvantaged pupils are likely to arrive at school with below-average language skills, leaving them at an educational disadvantage from the start.

Research shows parents have the power to change outcomes for their children, no matter what their background.

Working with parents to support their children's learning can have huge impact on a child's language development.

See PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

Language is most effectively learned in context

Reading widely develops language and vocabulary

High quality interactions expand language development

Multiple exposures are needed to add words to vocabulary

Children need
to be read to
and with

Children need time to talk about what they have read

Children need high quality role models with rich vocabulary

Children must be exposed to rich quality texts

Parents play a key role in language development

Teach children to VISUALIZE what they read & hear

Give children chances to predict & infer

Expose children to a text and language rich environment

- The size of a child's vocabulary is the best predictor of success on future tests and earnings.
- Early language develops at home. The home learning environment is a key predictor of a children's language development. By the age of two, children from low-income families show a six-month gap in language proficiency
- Children with poor language ability and vocabulary at the age of five are four times more likely to struggle with reading in adulthood and three times more likely to have mental health issues.
- Poor language leads to poor reading ability because children often struggle with phonological awareness skills: the ability to consciously manipulate a language's sound system.
- Language unlocks the imagination, helps us to explore new subjects and receive second hand knowledge such as how it feels to bungee jump without actually doing it.
- Spoken language and verbal interactions in the classroom impact on a child's language development

- What are children's language skills like in your school? Do you know which children need additional support?
- What are the children's home learning environments like? Could parents be supported at home?
- How could you spend the PPG to support children who have poor home learning environments?
- Could you spend the PPG to increase a child's vocabulary using books?

A “football net” analogy helps explain. Luckier children have lots of words in their heads, all connected in a web of phonological, semantic and grammatical associations. When we explain a new word, this tight football net can catch and hold it. Other children have many fewer words in their net, not well connected to each other. Their football net has holes in it. So when a new word is introduced, it goes straight through the holes and is forgotten. For these children a quick explanation won’t do the trick. Words will need to be explicitly taught and repeatedly practised.

Recasting is rephrasing something the child has said, either turning it into a question or restating what the child has said in the form of a fully grammatical sentence. For example, a child saying "cookie now" a parent may respond with "Would you like a cookie now?"

Expanding is restating, in a linguistically sophisticated form, what a child has said. For example, a child may say "car move road" and the parent may respond "A car drives on the road."

Labelling is identifying the names of objects. If a child points to an object such as a couch the mother may say "couch" in response. Labelling can also be characterized as referencing

Orthography is visually mapping whole words, linking spelling patterns and using the visual memory to hook words together.

Phonology is finding relationships between words through their pronunciation using the phonemes and syllables. When introducing a new word do you link it to words that rhyme, start or end in the same sound?

Etymology is exploring the words origin, is the word a derivation of another word, from Latin or Greek or borrowed for another language? Explore cultural, social and historical usage.

<https://www.etymonline.com/>

<https://wordsift.org/>

<https://describingwords.io/>

<https://www.vocabulary.com/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/skillswise/>

<https://visuwords.com/recording> system

<https://beta.freerice.com/#/english-vocabulary/1491>

Make meaning maps: If you are teaching a tricky new word like 'photosynthesis' then you can make a 'meaning map' – unpicking the word, explaining its origins, and linking it to similar scientific words.

Explain words related to how it makes you feel, what it reminds you of, what it makes you think about or when you have been exposed to similar words. Draw, dramatize and discuss the words related to your own experiences.

Language & Vocabulary Toolkit

This toolkit investigates a lack of sophisticated language and vocabulary as an educational disadvantage faced by children

Acknowledgments/Further Reading/Web Links:

Why closing the word gap matters: The Oxford Language Report 2018 <http://fdslive.oup.com/www.oup.com/oxed/Oxford-Language-Report.PDF?region=uk>

Preparing for literacy EEF 2018 <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/guidance-reports/preparing-for-literacy/>

Improving the home learning environment National Literacy Trust 2018 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756020/Improving_the_home_learning_environment.pdf

Law, J., Charlton, J., Asmussen, K. (2017). Language as a Child Wellbeing Indicator. <https://highlandliteracy.com/>

Early language development and children's primary school attainment in English and maths: New research findings. Save the Children <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/gb/reports/policy/early-language-development-and-childrens-primary-school-attainment.pdf>

Have you looked at the recommended reading spine lists recently?

<https://www.scholastic.co.uk/piecorbett/resources>

<https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk/category/secondary-ks3-ks4-reading-lists/>

<https://www.lovereadingschools.co.uk/>

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/our-recommendations/100-best-books/>

Facts about the English language

In English
70% of words have
more than one meaning

Approximately 4,000
new words are added to
the English dictionary
every year

Approximately one
new word is added to
the English language
every 2 hours

There are
1,025,109 English words
in existence

The word 'set' has 9
different definitions

A person needs to
know 8,000-9,000 word
families to enjoy a
reading book

The letter combination
'ough' can be
pronounced in 9
different ways

Some important questions to consider ...

- Have we considered the research evidence about what works?
- How can you use technology to support children's language development?
- Do the texts you give children provide effective challenge?
- Do staff need further training to support children's language development?
- Do we know what parents need to support their child's language?
- Do we model rich language to the children always?
- Do we encourage pupils to think beyond their experiences out of school?
- Do we have a vocabulary rich environment that promotes language?
- Do we provide language interventions for children who require it?
- How often do we audit the language needs of children in school?

Language

Encourage parents to take their children to the library and/or organise library visits from school.

Provide a cardboard bookmark for each pupil to record unfamiliar words as they read independently. Share frequently to discuss meanings and consider how to use them.

Ensure children are reading in every subject in the curriculum.

Have topic related role-play sessions in any year group with anchor words.

Vocabulary

Send a list of words home. Ask pupils to carry out an orientation project before the topic starts.

Try to share fiction with the class that links with the science or history topics, drawing attention to subject-specific vocabulary.

Ensure children have high quality interactions with staff rather than staff just talking to pupils.

Promote speaking in full sentences and the avoidance of slang terminology.

Ensure the children are surrounded in rich language.

Development

Repeat a pupils answer using more academic synonyms and scaffold their answers.

Use PPG to ensure every child has access to a dictionary and thesaurus.

Develop word walls and banks to visually display words and investigate together.

Plan time for children to tell and write their own stories using pictures, photos, props. Make into books and act out.

Ideas

When planning a science or history topic, make a list of vocabulary that pupils will need to know. Display, refer to, and revisit this list often. Share pictures for as many of the words as possible.

Use PPG to specifically target children to practise reading aloud.

Show video clips or pictures to illustrate words or phrases that occur in the book you're reading, e.g. the dog snarled viciously.

Ensure texts are meaningful and enjoyable for children to read.

Pre-teach vocabulary and use every opportunity to cement the vocabulary. Create non-negotiables of word lists children must use.