

Why does vocabulary matter?

The more vocabulary words young children know, the better they can understand what they read when they get older.

Vocabulary and Dual Language Learners

Children who are Dual Language Learners (DLL) really need vocabulary instruction as they are learning two languages at the same time.

Children who are DLL might initially have smaller vocabularies in each language. That's because our vocabulary is based on where we learn the word.

For example, Spanish-English speaking children who are DLL might know the word "playground" in English, but not in Spanish, because playground is associated with schools, a place where most of the time, children are exposed to only English.



Vocabulary
& DLLs

How can we classify words?

1

Tier 1 words are those considered to be everyday, common words like pencil, chair, house.

2

Tier 2 words are considered sophisticated words that children may not hear everyday, but they need to know to understand academic texts. Examples include enormous, gigantic, and gorgeous.

3

Tier 3 words are considered specific to a subject area like science or math. Examples include photosynthesis and equation.

Types of Words

Which words should I teach?



While Tier 1 and Tier 3 words are important, these can be taught by showing picture examples or briefly talking about the words. DLLs will benefit from learning Tier 1 and 3 words.

But to help children succeed in the future, they need to learn Tier 2 words!

How should I teach Tier 2 words?

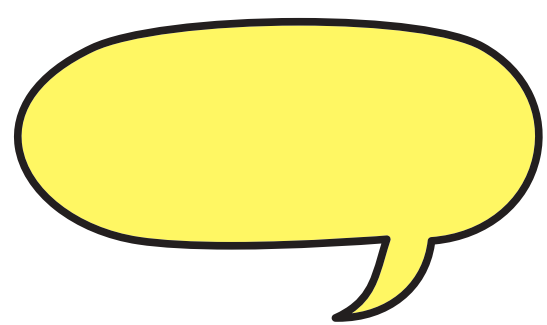


- Select only 2-4 Tier 2 words to teach per week
- Find Tier 2 words in books
- Provide child-friendly definitions
- Provide examples vs. non-examples
- Use the word in different contexts
- Repeat, repeat, repeat!

Teaching
the right
words

Habla
DLL

Example: Let's teach the word "enormous"



Child-friendly definition:

Enormous means really big!
What does enormous mean?



Examples vs. non-examples:

Put your thumbs up if an ant is enormous. Now put your thumbs up if an elephant is enormous.



Use word in different contexts:

In our book, the truck was enormous. It was really big!
Now that we are in the playground,
I see an enormous slide!
The slide is really big!
What does enormous mean?



Check out the book,
[Bringing Words to Life](#)
for more resources!

Vocabulary
teaching
example

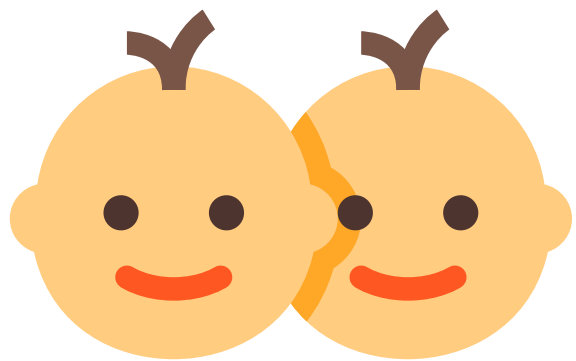
Adapting vocabulary instruction to DLLs



Use pictures, objects, and other visuals to clarify meaning of words



Review words in small-groups



Take advantage of cognates
Cognates are words that are spelled and sound the similarly in two different languages

The word "enormous" in English is the same as "enorme" in Spanish.



Adapting instruction to DLLs



Check out these free list of [cognates!](#)