



Nouns (naming words)

“A noun is a word for a person, place or object”

How can we teach nouns?

Children need to hear words many times in a variety of situations and environments before they start to understand and later use them.

Here are some ideas of how adults can help children to understand and use nouns:



Play time

- As your child plays and explores, **sit at his/her level** to join in. Whilst you are at your child's level, he/she can see your face and how your mouth moves as you say words.
- As your child picks up an object or toy, **clearly** name it (using the **single word** e.g. 'cup' / 'car').
- **Follow what your child is doing** rather than asking him/her to follow your lead all the time. This way, your child is more likely to stay at the activity, therefore providing the adult with more opportunity to model language.
- If your child does name an item, **praise** him/her and then **reinforce** the language by **repeating** the word.
- If you are trying to teach your child specific vocabulary, set out toys that will encourage this. For example, if you want your child to learn

transport vocabulary, you could set out cars and trains. If you want to focus on clothing, you could set out doll, teddy and clothing for dressing up.

Snack time

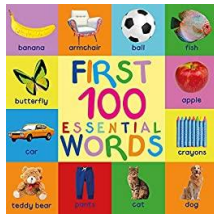


- Name foods and drink clearly for your child as you offer them. Emphasise the nouns and give choices, for example; “**apple** or **breadsticks?**” / “**milk** or **water?**”
- When your child has chosen, in some way, what they would like to eat (such as by pointing, grabbing, gesturing, trying to say the word); name it again as you give the food to him/her.
- By cutting foods up and offering a little at a time, this will provide numerous opportunities in one sitting for adults to name and reinforce the vocabulary.
- Repeat key words you want your child to learn, for example, “**juice**....more **juice**....drinking **juice**.... **Juice** has finished”.
- Maybe ask your child to help set the table at mealtimes. Name objects as you do so e.g. “cup, spoon, plate, milk”.



Out and about

- Name things whilst out for a walk. For example, whilst in the park you may see; dog, tree, ball, bike.
- Keep your language simple.
- Whilst in the supermarket, encourage your child to help you find items. Before you put them into the trolley, name it clearly.
- Where possible, encourage your child to touch, feel, smell and taste objects (if safe to do so) as you name them.



Books

- Introduce your child to books containing everyday objects.
- Name the pictures clearly for your child.
- Alternatively, you could make your own book with or for your child. Try to include pictures that are motivating or functional. Think about words your child could learn such as favourite toys, people or food.



Singing

- Children learn well from repetition. It is easier for some children to remember vocabulary from songs.
- When actions are used alongside singing, a child is able to link the action to the words they hear or sing.
- For older children, singing teaches rhyming and they can learn about sounds in words along with everyday concepts (dependent on the song).



Structured activities

If your child has established attention and listening skills and is able to follow adult direction for a short time, try setting up a variety of structured activities to teach new words:

- You could take turns with your child to post noun pictures into a box. Name the pictures before they are posted.
- Try hiding noun pictures around the room for your child to find and collect. As they are found, clearly name them.
- Fill a bag with everyday objects and encourage your child to choose one each time as you name the objects. You could make this into a game and feel the objects in the bag, trying to guess what it could be.

Here are some pictures you could cut out and use to get started:

(though please remember that some children learn easier from seeing the real object)



