



Module 3: Infants
Quantity & Quality Talk Matters
Oral Language & Vocabulary Development
Early Literacy Matters

Module 3: Quantity and Quality Talk Matters

Oral Language & Vocabulary Development

Module 3 at a Glance...

In Module 2, you considered ways positive teacher-child interactions help to foster self-expression, rich conversations, and interest in books and writing. Emphasis was placed on enriching the physical classroom environment and providing multiple opportunities for children to engage in oral interactions.

In this module, you will:

- Explore specific, developmentally appropriate activities for further developing oral language, vocabulary, and conceptual knowledge for infants, toddlers, and young children.
- Gain a better understanding of why children need to be actively engaged in vocabulary development from an early age.
- Use oral language activities to build phonological awareness.

Learner Outcomes for Module 3

Learner Outcomes:

- LO1: Learners will learn how to further children's oral language development through intentionally planned activities for increasing the use of descriptive words in conversations.
- LO2: Learners will explore developmentally appropriate activities to frequently and actively engage children in vocabulary development.
- LO3: Learners will explore the ways speaking and listening activities develop children's awareness of the sounds in their language.

Connections to the “Read to be Ready” Campaign

This module aligns to the current Read to be Ready campaign’s following key beliefs:

- Early literacy matters.
- Teachers are critical.
- It takes a community.

Video link to “Early Literacy Matters” from Read to be Ready website:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=60J8qRjRPkE>

Module 3 Overview

Overview: Module 3 will consist of three instructional presentations. These presentations will help you reflect on the importance of the quantity and quality of talk for optimal development of oral language and vocabulary for infants, toddlers, and young children.

- In **Presentation 1**, you will learn how to further children’s oral language development through intentionally planned activities for increasing the use of descriptive words in conversations.
- In **Presentation 2**, you will focus on strategies and supports for building and expanding children’s vocabulary. Emphasis is placed on beginning this work early and actively engaging children often in their vocabulary development.
- In **Presentation 3**, you will explore how teachers can increase children’s awareness of sounds in their language through playful listening and speaking activities.

Following each presentation, you will apply your learning through Practice Activities included in the Learning Guide.

Suggested Timeline for Completing Module

Modules contain 4 short presentations that are designed to be completed during relaxed ratios or other times as set by your school or agency. Your director or program coordinator may suggest or establish a timeline for each presentation to be completed within the module. Please take a moment to confirm your site's requirements while noting the submission deadline for the final Learning Application Assignment that you will submit electronically to your literacy coach for feedback and support. All other completed activities will remain in your participation guide and available for your coaches review.

- **Section 1:** Start at the beginning of the module and complete Presentation 1 and Practice Activity 1.
- **Section 2:** Complete Presentation 2 and Practice Activity 2.
- **Section 3:** Complete Presentation 3 and Practice Activity 3.
- **Section 4:** Complete the Learning Application Assignment for Module 3 and submit it electronically to your literacy coach for feedback and support.
- Please refer to your Learning Guide for a Module 3 checklist.

Presentation 2: Every Word Counts— Building Vocabulary

When we gift children with new words and build their vocabulary within real-world contexts, we increase their:

- Use of descriptive words in conversations
- Confidence in communicating and sharing ideas
- Desire to learn and engage with more words
- Understanding of knowledge and concepts

Build vocabulary early and often!

The challenge before us is this...

- There is an increased number of five-year-old children starting school with 3,000 fewer words in their language tool box than other children.
- Kids who start out ahead tend to stay ahead.
- Kids who start out behind often stay behind.

Early literacy research confirms that every word counts, and vocabulary building should begin early and occur often.

Meaningful Contexts

- Word learning and vocabulary development should be taught in meaningful contexts and applied to authentic speaking, listening, writing, and reading activities.
- Teaching new words in isolation results in short-term learning.
- Teaching new words in context results in enduring understanding and expanded vocabulary. New words should be related to real-world experiences and problems.
- It's also important to connect new words to a child's personal experiences and interests.

Building Knowledge

- When new words are taught in meaningful context, a child not only learns new words, but builds knowledge around a topic related to those words.
- Early childhood teachers must invest in building children's knowledge and skills simultaneously.
- Reading books with rich language and vocabulary to children is critical for growing successful readers. Engaging children more with words (text) will help build later reading proficiency.

Teachers play a critical role.

- Teachers play a critical role in modeling rich, descriptive, and meaningful language.
- Just as we need to be intentional in our planning, we must be intentional in building children's vocabulary in both quality and quantity.
- Plan ahead for new vocabulary you will model, and provide children opportunities to engage in real-world experiences in which they can apply the new words learned.

Speaking, Listening, and Vocabulary Building for Infants

- At two months, infants begin to babble vowel sounds. The infant learns by hearing the sounds of others as well as from hearing and producing her own sounds (Lillard & Jessen, 2003). Pacifiers can limit them from hearing and producing their own sounds.
- By six months, babies combine vowel and consonant sounds.
- The amount and quality of an infant's babbling correlates with the amount of attention that parents and care givers give to him (Lillard & Jessen, 2003, p. 165).
- By 12 months, most babies' first word is spoken!

Speaking, Listening, and Vocabulary Building for Infants

- It's important to note that children's receptive language (their ability to listen and respond) develops at a faster rate than their expressive (spoken) language. This means that they will understand more words than they actually can say (Callander & Nahmad-Williams, 2010, p. 11).
- Tone of voice and facial expressions help infants' understanding of words.
- Infants positively respond when adults communicate using a higher-pitched, more exaggerated, and softer voice. This kind of talk is called motherese.

Speaking, Listening, and Vocabulary Building for Infants

- Babies develop speech and learn meaning of new words through repeated exposure to songs and rhymes combined with movement.
- Repetition of sounds, words, and movement help infants to predict what comes next.
- Some favorite rhymes that incorporate movement include *The Itsy Bitsy Spider*, *This Little Piggy*, *Patty-Cake Patty-Cake*, and *Row, Row, Your Boat*.

How do rhymes with movement provide opportunities for speaking, listening, and vocabulary building? Write your thoughts on a blank space in the Learning Guide.



Practice Activity 2: Vocabulary Building with Rhymes - Infants

- For this practice activity, you will give the “rhyme vocabulary-building” activity a try in your own classroom using a rhyme of your own choosing with an infant in your care. (A link to a booklet with rhymes and fingerplays is provided in the resource section for this module if needed.)
- Think of how you will be intentional with your voice, facial expression, and body movements to provide an engaging speaking, listening, and vocabulary-building experience for the infant.
- After interacting with the children during the vocabulary-building activity, proceed to the next part of Practice Activity 2 to reflect on the learning experience.

Reflection on Practice Activity 2 - Infants

Reflect on the Vocabulary Building with Rhymes Activity you engaged in with an infant in your care, and briefly respond to each of the questions below in the Learning Guide:

- How was planning ahead helpful?
- How was your language intentional?
- How did the infant respond?
- Did the use of movement help to reinforce the meaning of the new words in context?
- How did your interactions help to foster the infant's engagement with the new words?
- What would you do differently next time?

End of Section 2

Congratulations, you just completed Section 2 of Module 3.

- Be sure you have completed Section 2 activities in the Learning Guide.
- Continue to practice introducing new vocabulary words in real-world contexts and with books with rich language and vocabulary.
- When ready, move on to the presentation for Section 3.