



# Top tips for developing vocabulary



## HANEN

When reading key texts plan vocabulary using a strategy developed by The Hanen Centre™ called 'Shoot for the SSTaRS'. An acronym that stands for: Stress, Show, Tell, Relate and Say it again. The Hanen Centre™ has a wide range of resources, tips and training supporting professionals & parents, so they have the skills to promote the best possible language, social and literacy skills in young children.

## CONCEPT CAT

Use Concept Cat to teach early verbal concepts (such as 'before, early and through') core to the curriculum of maths and science, explicit teaching of vocabulary is followed by implicit teaching in play-based learning. One word is taught per week; and there are three levels. It is part of the Word Aware 2 Teaching Vocabulary in the Early Years approach. Share the words with parents and ideas for activities.



## MAKATON

Introduce a toy monkey 'Makaton Monkey' to teach signs for everyday words like milk, water, and apple. This makes vocabulary tangible and relatable. Extend learning by linking words to the curriculum, such as naming colours, shapes, or even different foods. Visual timetables using Makaton signs and symbols can further enhance understanding, helping children to know what is expected next, and develop a sense of control and confidence.





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## CURRICULUM

Spend time with subject leaders and looking at the curriculum throughout the school. Together plan the development of key vocabulary across the areas of learning in the EYFS and linked to the wider curriculum.



## SNACK TIME

Make use of snack time to revisit specific vocabulary and check children's understanding of what has been taught. Extend their communication skills and wider vocabulary by having an interesting object on the table to talk about whilst having snack.



## COMBINING STRATEGIES

One effective approach is to combine some of these strategies, particularly when reading stories. Focus on specific curriculum words and concepts during these sessions. Utilising the 'Shoot for the SSTaRS' method alongside Makaton signs and symbols. Plan regular times to revise these words! Display these symbols around your classroom in areas where you might use the associated vocabulary. This playful yet structured approach makes learning both engaging and meaningful.



## USEFUL WEBSITES

- <https://www.blackpoolteachinghospital.nhs.uk/services/childrens-speech-and-language-therapy/professionals>
- <http://thinkingtalking.co.uk/word-aware/>
- <https://www.hanen.org/home>
- <https://www.makaton.org>

## USEFUL BOOKS

- Teaching Children to Listen in the Early Years: A practical approach
- Word Aware 2: Teaching Vocabulary in the Early Years
- Time to Talk: A Programme to Develop Oral and Social Interaction Skills for Reception and Key Stage One

