

Oral Language and Vocabulary

Information For Parents

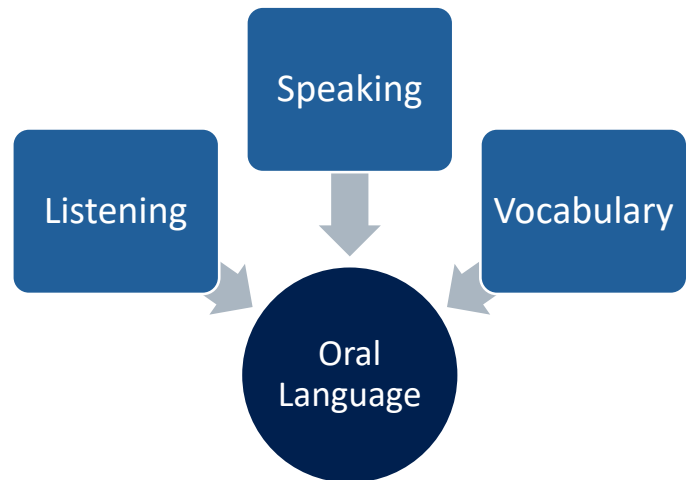
What are Oral Language and Vocabulary?

Oral language is the ability to produce and comprehend spoken language, including vocabulary and grammar. It is sometimes called spoken language, and it includes listening, speaking, conversations, and vocabulary development.

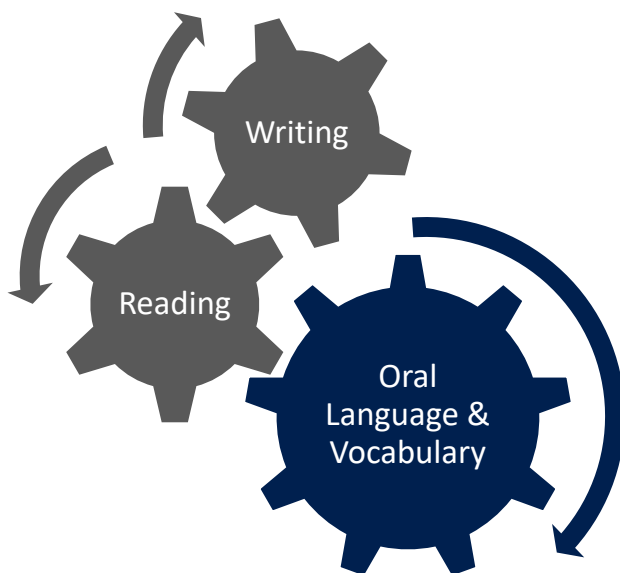
Vocabulary is the knowledge of words and word meanings and includes words that a person understands and uses in language. Vocabulary is essential for both learning to read and comprehending text.

Unlike reading, oral language development is a natural process for humans and a basic skill necessary for higher forms of language.

(CCR 301-92, 2.23; NELP, 2008)



Why are Oral Language and Vocabulary Important?



Oral language, vocabulary, reading, and writing grow together; each one helps the others improve.

Oral language development comes first and is the foundation for written language development.

Speaking to your child in your home or preferred language supports their oral language and literacy development.

Children with strong oral language skills and large vocabularies typically become strong readers when they receive explicit phonics instruction.

(Birsh & Carreker, 2018; Cardenas-Hagan, 2020; Honig et al., 2018; Kahmi & Catts, 1989; Lonigan & Shanahan, 2012)

What Do Oral Language and Vocabulary Look Like at School?

Teachers build language-rich environments by:

- Embedding oral language development into lessons across the day
- Modeling academic language
- Giving students multiple opportunities to communicate with others
- Providing direct and indirect vocabulary instruction
- Reading aloud to students to improve listening skills and introduce new concepts



(Birsh & Carreker, 2018; Cardenas-Hagan; Honig et al., 2018; Lonigan & Shanahan, 2012; NRP, 2000)

How Can You Support Oral Language and Vocabulary at Home?

You can model and expand your children's language through conversations where you provide support to extend their responses as they learn to talk about the world around them.



Read books together and talk while you read. Talking with your child when you read is an important way to develop vocabulary and knowledge about a variety of topics!

(Kosanovich et al., 2020; Kosanovich et al., 2021)

Additional Resources

Please visit the [Colorado Department of Education \(CDE\) Parent Resource website](#) for more information about the Colorado READ Act, READ Plans, and the Science of Reading.



[CDE Parent Resources Website](#)

References

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