

**WORDS ARE** HERE,  
THERE, AND **EVERYWHERE**

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**SESAME STREET**



Grow Up Great

Brought to you by PNC Grow Up Great<sup>®</sup>  
in partnership with Sesame Workshop.

# THIS IS WHAT DATA COLLECTION LOOKS LIKE.

To kids, words are the most precious data. Every conversation a child has with a parent or caregiver fosters brain development. Sadly, some kids hear millions fewer words by kindergarten than others. Frequent dialogue between parents and children leads to bigger vocabularies, stronger reading skills, and better achievement in school — and ultimately, life. For ten years now, PNC Grow Up Great® has supported early childhood education initiatives in our communities. Learn more at [pncgrowupgreat.com](http://pncgrowupgreat.com)



# WORDS ARE HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE

Your child needs words to grow and thrive. Words help her express her natural curiosity and wonder about the amazing world around her. Just think: There's a word for every single thing she sees and experiences. And words are the foundation for a child's school readiness and future success.

Sesame Workshop, in partnership with PNC Grow Up Great®, created this guide, which offers strategies for using everyday moments to grow your child's vocabulary while building on his natural curiosity and excitement about learning. Together with your child, you will discover how one simple word, like the name of a familiar object, can lead to so many more.

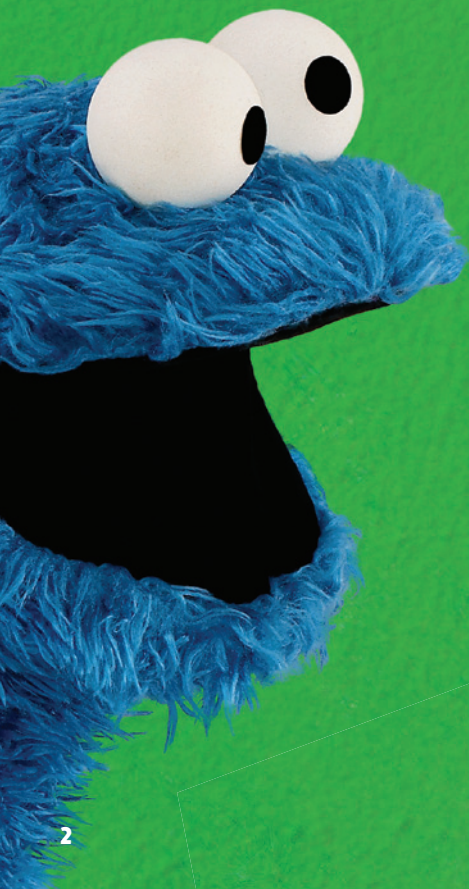
In this guide, you will find the following simple strategies to help build your child's vocabulary:

- Let's Talk About It!
- Asking Questions
- You Read to Me, I'll Read to You
- PLUS: Fun word activities to do anytime



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LET'S TALK ABOUT IT!



**When you talk together during everyday moments, your child is learning new words naturally. And you'll find that words are all around you—everything you do and see has a word! Every object you see and action you do can trigger an exploration of more words.**

Use the ideas below to begin having fun conversations!

● **When you're helping your child put on a **sweater** in the morning...**

Talk about what you are doing: "Let's choose a **sweater** to keep you warm." Then build on what she says: "Yes, that *fuchsia* sweater you chose is *thick* and *soft*, just right for keeping you warm and cozy." By starting with a familiar word, sweater, and describing your thinking, actions, and decisions, you're introducing your child to new words.

● **If you're traveling somewhere and the **radio** is on...**

Talk together about the music on the **radio**: "Is the *tempo*—the speed—of this song fast or slow?" and "What a great *rhythm*. Let's clap and tap along."

● **As you walk around the neighborhood and notice **signs**...**

Encourage your child to look at a **sign** on a door or street corner you are passing. Ask: "What do you think it says?" Point out clues that will help him figure it out—for example, ENTER and EXIT are usually on or above doors, STOP is always on a red *octagon* shape, and so on. Then ask: "What do we do when we see those signs?"

● **At bath time, while you're scrubbing from **head to toe**...**

Invite your child to chime in with the names of other parts of her *body* as she soaps up: *elbows*, *belly button*, *knuckles*, *ankles*, and *calves*.



**THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES**

Children need to hear words used again and again to remember and understand their meanings. Each time a new word is repeated, find a way to remind each other—make a ding-ding noise, give each other a high five, or even try "acting out" the new word!



# ASKING QUESTIONS

**Children love to ask questions. It's their way of showing curiosity and figuring out how things work. It's also a great way to build vocabulary.**

- ❓ "What if?" questions inspire your child to imagine and wonder. If a bus passes by while you're outside walking, ask: "*What if* we were on that bus? Where would you want to go?"
- ❓ Ask questions that encourage more than a "yes" or "no" answer to keep the conversation going. Try questions that lead to more back-and-forth talking, such as: "What do you see at this *construction* site?" And build on his answers: "I see the *hammer*, too. What do you think it's for?"
- ❓ Family meals are a great time to ask one another questions. Try: "What was the best thing about today?" Your child's answer will help you to get to know her likes and dislikes and will lead to more questions and answers like: "What are you looking forward to tomorrow?"



## THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES

Asking questions like "Why is it raining?" is your child's way of showing you what interests her and expressing her curiosity. Answer the questions you can, but it's also okay not to know all the answers. Try asking: "What do you think?" Then discover the answer together online or at the library.



# YOU READ TO ME, I'LL READ TO YOU

**Reading together is not only a great shared experience, it's also a terrific way to develop a love of words.**

**Making the most out of reading together can be simple and fun.**

📖 Children learn best when they're actively involved. Ask questions as you go along: "What is that boy doing?" "How did that make you feel?" Encourage your child to share ideas and talk about the pictures. He might notice an animal in the illustration and ask: "What's that?" You can say: "It's a *penguin*, a black-and-white bird that doesn't fly but can swim really well." See where the questions take you both!

📖 Wordless picture books build vocabulary, too. Talk together about who's on each page and what's happening. By going through the pictures, you will find out what your child is thinking and introduce new words.



## THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES

Children first learn to "read" pictures, symbols, and signs. This helps build a foundation for understanding that letters have sounds, which can create words that have meanings. Point out labels, traffic signs, billboards, signs on stores, and restroom symbols. It's exciting to see your child practicing "reading" what's around her!



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# MORE FUN WITH WORDS!

**Make learning new words a playful adventure—  
anytime, anywhere!**

**\* Try using different words that mean the same thing.**

As you pass by a fast-moving vehicle, take turns thinking of other words that mean fast—*brisk, quick, rapid, speedy, swift*, and so on. (You can do the same thing for objects that are *slow*, or *sluggish*, like a snail.) You can also use an online dictionary to find more words.

**\* BIG words are exciting!** Invite your child to find things in your home with long names: a *calculator, refrigerator, tambourine*, or stuffed *rhinoceros*, for example. You can also look for pictures of things that have big words on your smartphone. Show your child that adding big words to his vocabulary can be big fun!

**\* Choose a word of the day.** Take turns using the word throughout the day and in different contexts: “Our word of the day is *curved*, or something with a rounded line. Look at the *curved* archway over that door. Can you walk in a *curvy* line?” Encourage her to find curved objects around the house or neighborhood.

**REMEMBER:**

**You can do it!  
Talking together,  
asking questions,  
and reading are all  
fun and easy ways  
to learn new  
words—here, there,  
and everywhere!**

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