



**Module 3: Toddlers**  
**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 children birth to five years old.
- 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 detailed 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
- Enduring 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 skill building 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 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 new words used.

# Speaking, Listening, and Vocabulary Building Young Toddlers

- Naming objects found in books and the environment not only help toddlers learn new words, but helps them make real-world connections to the words.
- Keep in mind that toddlers understand more than they can convey in their own words. It's important to continue to expose them to new words.
- Mealtimes provide wonderful opportunities for conversations between adults and toddlers. Teachers should intentionally plan new words to introduce toddlers to.
- Sharing books exposes toddlers to new words.

# Speaking, Listening, and Vocabulary Building Young Toddlers

- Tone of voice and facial expressions help young toddlers' understanding of words.
- Toddlers positively respond when adults communicate using a higher-pitched, more exaggerated and softer voice.
- Children copy the language they hear. Adults should always model good grammar and clear pronunciation.

# Vocabulary Building Activities

## Young Toddlers

- Toddlers 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 toddlers 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.



# Vocabulary-Building Activities

## Young Toddlers

Look for opportunities to build vocabulary in everyday experiences.

For example,

- Set up a tray with non-breakable plates, cups, pitcher, silverware, placements, and napkins and place it on a shelf in the classroom.
- Invite a toddler to come with you to set a table.
- With the toddler watching, remove one object from the tray at a time, name it, set it in place on the table, and name it again.
- Repeat for all objects. Remember to speak slowly.
- Return objects to the tray.
- Repeat, asking the toddler to help you set the table.



## Practice Activity 2: Vocabulary Building: Set the Table Young Toddlers

- For this practice activity, you will give the “table setting” vocabulary-building activity a try in your own classroom with a toddler.
- Think of how you will set the activity up and engage the toddler with the new vocabulary words.
- After interacting with the toddler 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

## Young Toddlers

**Practice Activity 2:** Reflect on the “Table Setting” Vocabulary-Building Activity you engaged in with a young toddler, and briefly respond to each of the questions below in the Learning Guide:

- How was planning ahead helpful?
- How were your language and movements intentional?
- How did the toddler respond?
- Did your model help to reinforce the meaning of the new words in context?
- How did your interactions help to foster the toddler’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 completed Section 2 activities in the Learning Guide.
- Continue to practice introducing new vocabularies in real-world contexts and through the reading of books rich in language and vocabulary.
- When ready, move on to the presentation for Section 3.