

Word Aware – Early Years Concepts

A Summary

All children will benefit from a sustained and methodical effort to ensure they have the vocabulary they need to access the curriculum and to develop their understanding and use of both spoken and written language. A strong base of oral language is essential for developing reading comprehension and writing skills. A multisensory and practical approach to structured vocabulary teaching will ensure that children have the best chance of flourishing at school.

Key points:

- Use a range of methods
- Teach words in context
- Teach strategies
- Have fun with words

Basic concepts

Basic concepts are important as they underpin later learning; they form a foundation that children can use to learn more advanced vocabulary. By linking the concepts to the class topics, children will be exposed to the words in context and in a naturally meaningful way.

Choose one concept per week to work on and work in a developmentally appropriate way.

Teaching

Make sure the children practise saying the word lots of times.

Introduce the meaning of the word using:

- Concept Cat Stories
- Personal experience
- Objects
- Signs or actions

Concept Cat stories are an engaging way of introducing new ideas to children. Please refer to the Word Aware Early Years book for a story for each concept.

Principles:

1. Demonstrate the concept and not the concept e.g. hot and not hot.

2. Add gestures or signs and symbols.
3. Repeat the concept word several times in the story.
4. Use multisensory experiences as much as possible.
5. Relate the concept to a range of objects.
6. Emphasise the concept and no/not the concept. Don't use opposites as this can be confusing.
7. Use the action, sign or gesture to reinforce the word.

Please refer to the book which contains everything you need to deliver robust vocabulary teaching, including a list of 80+ concepts:

Word Aware 2: Teaching Vocabulary in the Early Years – Stephen Parsons and Anna Branagan, published by Speechmark.

<https://www.speechmark.net/shop/word-aware-2-teaching-vocabulary-early-years>

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