



Module 3: Three to Five Year Olds
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.
- 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 describe 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

Each month, you will complete a literacy module. Modules were designed to allow you to complete small sections of the module at a time. The following timeline will help you successfully move through the module providing time to apply what you learn as you go.

- **Week 1:** Start at beginning of module and complete Presentation 1 and Practice Activity 1.
- **Week 2:** Complete Presentation 2 and Practice Activity 2.
- **Week 3:** Complete Presentation 3 and Practice Activity 3.
- **Week 4:** Complete 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 timeline and checklist.

Let's begin with a look at your books.

Before we dive into our Module 3 Presentations, let's start by having you look again through the books you received in your Early Literacy Matters start-up bag. This time, you are looking for books contain descriptive words, and new vocabulary words and concepts to build children's knowledge around.

After reading through the book, briefly respond to the following questions:

- What book did you choose?
- What new words and concepts will children be introduced to?
- How does the text inspire lively questions and observations?

Presentation 1: Developing Oral Language Early and Often

Presentation 1: Developing Oral Language Early and Often

Let's begin with a video clip which highlights oral language development for young children, and the important role the teacher plays in supporting this development.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gplBn1ypBOg>

Fostering Oral Language

As you just heard in the video clip, teachers play a critical role in fostering children's oral language development by:

- Speaking slowly and clearly
- Creating opportunities for 1:1 conversations
- Building familiar classroom routines so talk can focus on interactive conversations
- Emphasizing turn-taking
- Looking at books together and pictures
- Modeling use of familiar nouns, common verbs, and descriptive words
- Using teacher think alouds

Let's look at each of these strategies more closely so you can reflect and on how you can use them to foster your children's oral language.

Speaking Slowly and Clearly

- Quantity of talk matters. Children who are exposed to more frequent language learn language faster. They are like little sponges who absorb language used around them.
- Quality of talk matters. To enhance listening and comprehension, it's important to speak slowly and clearly, and minimize distractions and interruptions (Jalongo, 2010). Avoid "baby talk" and always model correct pronunciations of words.
- If a child is asking for more juice and utters, "mo joo-joo peas," smile and positively respond by slowly and clearly saying, "you want more juice please...let me get you some more juice."

Creating opportunities for 1:1 conversations

- It's important to create opportunities to talk with children one-on-one. Even if brief, the language modeled is enduring.
- In your 1:1 conversations, follow the child's interest and use guiding questions which will encourage interaction, thinking, and use of descriptive words. This is also a great time to model use of new nouns, verbs, or descriptive words. Words used in meaningful contexts are remembered and help to build knowledge.

Building familiar classroom routines

- It's important for teachers to build familiar classroom routines through modeling, displayed visual sequences, and practice so that children are comfortable with the procedures for meals, stories, learning centers, washing hands, and cleaning up.
- If time is spent ensuring children are familiar with classroom routines, then teachers will use less directive talk and more facilitated and interactive talk that models use of familiar nouns, common verbs, and descriptive words.



Use of Guiding Questions: Story Time

Guiding questions encourage interaction, thinking, and use of descriptive words. Here are some examples:

- Before reading aloud a book on the zoo:
 - I wonder what this book is about. Let's look at the cover for clues.
 - It looks like there are zoo animals. Have you ever been to the zoo? What is the zoo like? Where do the animals stay? Who cares for the animals?
 - I wonder what happens at the zoo in this story?
 - Let's take a picture walk through the book for some clues.
 - What do you think happens to the animals at the zoo? What made you think this?
 - Let's read the story and see if we were good at predicting what happens.
- Guiding questions can also be used during and after the reading of the book.



Looking at books together and pictures

- Looking at books and pictures with children provide opportunities for exposing children to new nouns, verbs, and descriptive words.
- Both literature and information text (books) should be shared to provide greater exposure to words and the way the words are used to build knowledge of language and concepts.
- Use book illustrations to engage children in turn-taking conversations that encourage use of familiar and less familiar nouns, verbs, and descriptive words.



Emphasize responsive turn-taking

- It's important to talk **to** and **with** a child often and use a variety of words. This involves pausing and waiting for children to respond. The more you positively respond them, the more they will engage in conversation.
- Talk with children throughout the day and in various settings to encourage turn-taking as part of every day practice.
- Saying nursery rhymes, songs, and chants **to** and **with** children not only encourage turn-taking, but also provide increased opportunities for using more diverse words.

Modeling use of familiar nouns, verbs, and descriptive words

Children's language will develop when caregivers (Hart & Risley, 1995):

- Use more words and more diverse words
- Provide positive and encouraging feedback
- Describe and explain things
- Give choices
- Listen to children and are responsive

Be intentional with the words you use. Find ways to describe familiar nouns using more diverse words. Let's practice being more descriptive with the following activity.

Descriptive, Naming “Bear” Activity

Ages 3-5

The goal of this activity is to engage children in a turn-taking conversation to use as many descriptive words to describe the bear in the photo.

Begin with this conversation starter, “I brought a picture of an animal to show you. What animal do you see?”

Child responds, “a bear.”

You respond, “Yes, what color is the bear?”

Child: a brown bear

Teacher: Yes, it is a brown bear. How big is the bear?

Child: bigger than me

Teacher: So your brown bear is enormous. How does the enormous brown bear feel?

Child: hungry

Teacher: Your enormous brown bear is hungry. If he is hungry, how will he find food?



Descriptive, Naming “Bear” Activity

Ages 3-5

Keep the conversation going...

Child: jump and catch it

Teacher: Good! Your enormous, hungry, brown bear jumps and catches food. What kind of food does he eat?

Child: fish

Teacher: I have some pictures of fish: trout, bass, goldfish. Give some facts about each fish. Which kind of fish would your bear eat?

Child: Bass

Teacher: With all the words you used, we know so much more about this bear. We now know that this is an **enormous, hungry, brown bear who jumps and catches Bass fish to eat because** they are tasty and swim in water near the bear.

Notice how the teacher used guided questions to engage the child in turn taking and used as many descriptive words to describe the bear in the photo. Just think of the lost opportunity for building oral language and knowledge if the teacher had just accepted the child’s response, “a bear.”

Practice Activity 1: Descriptive Naming “Bear” Activity

Ages 3-5

- For this Practice Activity, you will get to practice the descriptive naming animal activity you experienced in the previous slides.
- Over the next few days, create an opportunity to engage a child in 1:1 conversation about the photo of the bear shown here and included in the Learner Guide.
- Keep in mind that the goal of this activity is to engage the child in a turn-taking conversation to use as many descriptive words to describe the bear in the photo.
- Begin with this conversation starter, “I brought a picture of an animal to show you. What animal do you see?”



Reflection on Practice Activity 1

Ages 3-5

After engaging with a child in a turn-taking, descriptive conversation about the bear photo, briefly reflect on these questions:

- How did you model the use of descriptive words?
- How did the child respond to the 1:1 time to have a conversation with you?
- Why was it important to engage with the child 1:1 rather than doing this as a group activity?
- Based on the child's interests, what photo would you choose next for a 1:1 conversation using descriptive words?

Include your responses in your Learning Guide.

End of Week 1

Congratulations, you just completed Week 1 of Module 3.

- Check to be sure you completed Week 1 activities in the Learning Guide.
- Continue to practice modeling the use of descriptive words.
- When ready, move on to the presentation for Week 2.