

Have you ever thought how important vocabulary is in a child's early maths learning?

- 1) Children will need to hear a word many times before they learn it – this would apply with mathematical words too – can you find opportunities to repeat words several times to help your child remember them?
- 2) Children may have known the meaning of a word and now forgotten it – don't presume just because they once knew the meaning of a word they still remember this now. Could you check while you are asking a question?
- 3) You will probably need to model a word being used in an appropriate way for your child to learn how to use it. E.g. Child 'Look at the big tractor' Adult: 'Yes, it is larger than the car'.
- 4) Sometimes your child may appear not to understand a mathematical question but it could be the language or the way the question has been asked – have you tried asking it a different way or asking your child what the words mean?
- 5) Sometimes words mean different things in mathematics and every day life e.g. sum means addition in maths but we sometimes use it to mean a general maths question.
- 6) Your child's confusion over the meaning of words may be with the mathematical words but also the other 'every day' words in the sentence.
- 7) Sometimes different adults or children may use different words for the same thing which can prove confusing for children e.g. a child may not realise subtract and take away can be used interchangeably and therefore appear not to understand a problem that they could process if different language was used.
- 8) Open- ended questions can help children by giving them the opportunity to use the vocabulary they know to explain their thinking e.g. rather than asking 'What is  $3 + 3 =$ ' could you ask 'Can you show me some ways of making 6 – how do you know that is 6?'
- 9) Can you challenge your child by asking them to explain what they are doing when looking at a mathematical problem or defining a word? E.g. What does 'adding' mean?
- 10) Can you challenge your child by asking them to use different words to explain what they are doing? Hopefully your child will then learn to associate different vocabulary meaning the same or similar things.