



Professional Learning Module
Integrating Learning Throughout the Preschool Day

Integrating Vocabulary

Classroom Snapshot

Mrs. Harper is a veteran teacher at “My Little Angel Preschool.” She is an icon in the community and a teacher highly requested by parents because most of them had the privilege of being a student in her preschool classroom.

Mrs. Harper loves teaching and looks for new ideas and ways to grow her practice. She enjoys attending workshops as long as they are informative and provide ideas that she is able to use with her children. She recently attended the workshop “Growing Vocabulary in the Four-Year-Old Classroom.” During the workshop it was interesting to learn that other teachers were also becoming concerned about the number of children with low verbal skills. She imagined it was because children were “off doing other things” and not sitting around the dinner table and having family conversation.

She is aware that using rich vocabulary is an important way to grow children’s language and that children need to hear these words over and over so they become part of their language. As she thought about her workshop, she remembered one strategy for helping children grow their vocabulary and it was easy to implement.

She checked her Planning Guide and identified the vocabulary words that she was targeting for the week both from the stories she’s reading and the unit they were studying about plants and animals. She wrote each of the words on a card and placed them up high around the room. In this way, she and other adults in the room would be reminded to use them often and throughout the day. Once she noticed the children using the words, she would replace them with new ones.

She remembered the trainer saying, “Children are not supposed to learn to read these words, the goal is for the adults in the room to see and use the words as often as possible. You will be amazed at how quickly children will begin using the words in their conversations because YOU are using them.”

Integrating Language and Vocabulary Throughout the Day

- Provide and read to children a variety of concept-related books (e.g., farm animals, vegetables, the body, fiction and nonfiction) then display them in the reading and dramatic play area.
- During science the children provide what they know about bugs as the teacher charts the words.
- Describe children’s actions with descriptive words, write them down and have the children draw the action.
- Use puppets and props to model expressions of emotions.
- Provide daily experiences that introduce new vocabulary (e.g., demonstrate the concept of stability and use the word when discussing how to keep block structures from falling).

