

## Other things to try 8a - Developing vocabulary skills using 'word webs'

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### Why is this important?

'Word webs' build vocabulary. They help children make links between new vocabulary and old vocabulary, which means that words can be stored (and retrieved) more accurately/easily and links in meaning can be made. This technique is also referred to as 'mind mapping'.

#### What to do

- Develop a list of words unfamiliar to the child – this could be new topic vocabulary or words that could arise during everyday activities.
- Introduce the new word (e.g. 'winter').
- Write the word 'winter' in the middle of a piece of paper.
- Ask the child what he/she knows about 'winter'. The child might say 'snow' or 'cold'.
- If the child can't think of anything, find a story about winter (e.g. about a snowman or Christmas) and then start the discussion from there.
- Think about how words might link together and think about action words (e.g. 'shivering', 'sledging') as well as adjectives to describe winter.
- Talk about different clothes to wear in winter and the weather that winter brings.
- Encourage the child to lead the conversation and write down his/her ideas linking them together (e.g. 'winter' links to 'cold' and 'snow'). Think of other things that are cold (e.g. ice-cream).



#### Step up

- Talk about opposites (e.g. 'winter' vs. 'summer').
- Talk about the months that make up winter.
- Find someone who has a birthday in winter and talk about different activities to do in winter as opposed to summer (e.g. stay inside more, put the fire on to keep warm).



#### Step down

- Start by talking about things that the child can see (e.g. snow). This is easier to begin with as the child can relate to it.
- Make a 'picture' word web.
- Use real objects to demonstrate the connections.