







Word-learning Skills Group

What is *Word Aware*?

This handout provides background information for facilitators. Details about structuring the word-learning skills groups as well as activities are provided on pages 210-16.

Word Aware consists of four parts:

	1. Make Words Count	Provision of an environment in which children are surrounded by spoken and written words and are inspired to learn them.
	2. Teaching Vocabulary	Introduction of new words from content-rich subjects as well as the fast-paced teaching of words found in books.
	3. Word Detective	Teaching strategies to enhance children's independent word learning.
	4. Fun with Words	Enjoying, celebrating and reinforcing vocabulary.

In order to learn words effectively children need to be able to analyse words in terms of the sounds within the word (phonological skills). This includes:

- Identifying the first sound in the word
- Identifying the number of syllables
- Identifying which words rhyme with the word (these words are often nonsense words).

They also need to be able to talk about the meaning of a word (semantics). Children need to be able to do a range of tasks such as being able to:

- Categorise (eg this is an animal)
- Describe function (eg you can eat it)
- Identify location (eg you find this in a school)
- Describe what it looks like
- Define the word, giving the most important features of the word.

Many children can carry out these tasks effectively without specific teaching. However, some children with significant needs may require some help. This is why these children have been chosen to participate in a word-learning skills group.

Children need to develop these basic building block skills in order to develop the word-learning skills they can use in the classroom. This will help them access the specific teaching of curriculum and text-based learning used in the classroom (the STAR approach). The word-learning skills group works on skills that are prerequisites for the 'Teaching vocabulary' section.