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The Word Gap

Language is about communication; communication with self and communication with others. It helps people to move from the here and now to the past, into the future and into alternative worlds.

Tina Bruce 1987



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Recent Research

- Recent research (Fernald, Marchman, & Weisleder 2013) indicates that:
 - * Children's vocabulary skills are linked to their **economic backgrounds** and the vocabulary gap is evident in **toddlers**;
 - * At **24 months**, children from the lower economic group were performing at the same level as the 18-month-olds from the high economic group (constituting a **6 month word gap by that age**);
 - * by **3 years** of age, there is a **30 million word gap heard** between children from the wealthiest and poorest families.

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/feb2014/the-word-gap>

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Earlier Research

- Earlier research (Hart & Risley, 1995) also identified that:
 - “Simply **in words heard** there was significant variation in the home ...”

Importantly: Remain sensitive and supportive to parents - including those experiencing depression / mental health, traumatic and / or challenging life events due to poverty or low social capital.

Let's take a minute to share our practice!

Reflections on promoting communication and language opportunities for

play, praise, listening, observation, modelling, time to extend and explore ideas (sustained thinking), natural conversations to develop shared understanding, familiar and unfamiliar starting points, cultural sensitivity, imaginative and real world experiences, social skills language explicitly encouraged, build trusting relationships with parents/carers, visual reinforcement (signs, pictures, objects), storytelling, mark making, firing creativity and curiosity, secure relationships