



The summer offers great opportunities to play and learn in the garden.

Bug hunts are a brilliant opportunity to get children talking and improve their **vocabulary**. Follow your child's interest, **respond** to their comments, develop and expand what they say.

Name the bugs: worm, woodlouse, millipede, beetle, ladybird.

Talk about their different body parts: wings, body, legs, antenna, eyes, shell, etc.

Use verbs to discuss how they move: slide, crawl, slither, creep. Encourage your child to imitate the bug movements in the garden.

Model descriptions of the bugs: tiny, spotty, stripy, dangerous, scary, delicate. Look at their similarities and differences. Are a worm and a millipede the same? Do they all have wings? Do they all have the same number of legs? Sort the bugs into categories: Bugs with wings, bugs that crawl.

Reinforce the vocabulary by taking photographs of the insects you find and through sharing books together. i.e. "The very Hungry Caterpillar", "The very busy spider", Eric Carle.

It only takes a few random objects, such as boxes, chairs, or blankets, to make up all sorts of different obstacle courses. It will allow your child opportunities to experience the **prepositions** as they follow the directions to go **under**, **over** or **through** the equipment. Let them have turns at giving the instructions, this will encourage them to use a mix of a lot of different nouns, prepositions, and verbs in their directions.

Building a den allows opportunities for children to share their ideas and issue instructions. Therefore, improving their **expressive language**.

Support this by asking open ended questions for example "What do you need me to do?", "You have no door what could you use?"

Talk about problems they encounter for example, "The roof keeps falling down what can we do to make it stronger?"

Encourage your child to shout out words of encouragement to others during competitive games.

Ask them to explain the rules of a familiar game to a friend.

Take photographs of your child as they make their den, play the games. Use the pictures to share or recall their experiences with others.



Listening walks are a great way to support children's language skills. Take your child outside and name and talk about the sounds they can hear. Sort the sounds into quiet and noisy sounds.

Encourage your child to project their voice outside. Let them experiment with homemade megaphones.

Play games that experiment with volume such as "What the time, Mr Wolf", where children can have the opportunity to use a range of volumes and observe the effects. Children can practise whispering and shouting to the wolf, to see how far away their voices can be heard.

Scavenger hunts are fun, motivating ways of encouraging children to **follow directions** or listen to clues. The clues can be set at various levels of difficulty and can be given in lots of different ways. For example, "The first clue is under the yellow bucket.", "The clue is behind the big red bucket."

Or riddles can be set "I am made of plastic, I have a handle and you use me to water the plants, find me."