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## Knowledge Organisers for parents

Dear Parent

We are trialling the use of **Knowledge Organisers** to help develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world and vocabulary development. These will replace the older long term plan overviews previously sent out.

**Development of vocabulary is one of North's whole school priorities.** It is one that you can support us with at home.

### Did you know...

- a child's **vocabulary** growth is directly linked to their overall **school achievement**.
- A child's **vocabulary** at school is directly correlated with **earning power** later on in life.
- the more words a child knows, the more information the child has access to, and
- having a large vocabulary helps children think and learn about the world in a more sophisticated manner?

### How can you help?

See the reverse of this letter for some handy tips.

The essential knowledge and vocabulary that will be taught has been captured in the Knowledge Organiser that accompanies this letter (they will also be uploaded to the school website under curriculum). Use it as a basis to have conversations with your child throughout the half term. It may even inspire your child to take part in their own research projects around the topic.

Do be mindful that information will be taught in stages over the weeks so do not use it to test your child straight away. However, towards the end of the term it could be used as an informal checking activity to help your child retain key information. The more you talk about the topic and the vocabulary with your child, the better their understanding will be. Hopefully we will see the impact of this in their written tasks.

### **STICK THEM TO YOUR FRIDGE AND REFER TO THEM!**

We are interested in hearing your feedback around the experience of using them at home with your child.

Regards

## Tips for supporting Vocabulary Development

Here are some tips to keep in mind when modelling new vocabulary for your child:

- **Follow your child's lead** – This means emphasizing words that come up during everyday conversations and interactions with your child. If you talk about what interests your child, it is more likely your child will pay attention and learn a new word. If your child is interested in playing with cars, you can model words like “push”, “beep beep”, or “fast” with a young child or more complicated words like “mechanic”, “speed”, or “traffic” with a toddler. You can provide explanations for toddlers like “he needs to get a new tire because his tire is flat”, talk about events in the past such as “remember when we had to take our car in to be repaired?”, or events that will happen in the future such as “Our car is dirty. Maybe we should go to the car wash.”
- **Children need to hear a word several times before they start to use it** – This means that you might use a word with your child many times before your child actually says the word himself. Children's understanding of words precedes their use of words. So, they will understand far more words than they can actually say. If you repeat words for your child on different occasions, it will give them more opportunities to hear and learn new words.
- **Don't bombard your child with words** – Just because quantity is important at some stages of development, this doesn't mean that you should shower your child with constant talk. You should aim for a balanced conversation between you and your child – you say something, then your child says or does something, and so on. It is important to **wait** after you say something so you give your child a chance to respond in his own way.
- **Help your child understand what a new word means** – By giving details about new words or explaining what words means, you build your child's understanding of new words. For example, if you are playing with cars and introduce the word “passenger”, you might say something like “a passenger is someone who rides in a car or a bus or a train. A passenger goes for the ride but doesn't drive the car or the bus.” Relating new words to your child's personal experiences also helps him connect with new words. For example, if you are talking about the word “nervous,” you might say something like “Remember when you started preschool – you felt nervous. But eventually when you were more comfortable there, you didn't feel nervous anymore.”
- **Actions can speak louder than words** – If you accompany your words with actions, gestures, or facial expressions, it will help your child understand the meaning of the words. For example, when modelling the word “weary”, you could do a sleeping action (hands under your head) or yawn so that your child understands what the word means. Your voice can also add meaning to a word. For example, if you say the word “frightened” or “terrified” with a shaky voice that sounds like you are scared, it will help your child understand what you mean.

The bottom line... it's not just *how much* you say, but also *what* you say and *how you say it* that makes a difference for your child's vocabulary growth. Keeping one step ahead of your child will promote his vocabulary skills, and also set him on the path for success in school.