

**Text to Talk: Connecting Schools and Families**

**Introductory Texts**

Dear Teacher,

Thank you for participating in *Text to Talk*. Your role this year is incredibly important, and we greatly appreciate all your efforts.

The purpose of *Text to Talk* is to connect teachers with families to help support children’s language development. We do this by sending home words that are being learned at school via the website Remind. The Remind messages come to parents as text messages.

We hope that by letting families know what new words children are learning in school, the families can reinforce what is learned and practice the new words at home with their children.

In prior research, we have found that *Text to Talk* teachers feel more connected to families, families appreciate knowing what children are learning, and children are proud to show their new knowledge to both teachers and family members. Our goal is that children whose teachers and families use *Text to Talk* learn more words and end the school year with larger vocabularies.

**Next Steps as a *Text to Talk* Teacher**

***What Texts Should I Send?***

We have prepared all the texts for you to send. (If you want to send additional texts about other words or books that is fine! We just ask that you send our texts at a minimum.) We have chosen four words from books commonly read for each Creative Curriculum study. We created texts for you to send when you read a particular book. You will send these texts around the time you read each book.

For example, if you read your Text to Talk book on Monday, you can send Text 1 on Monday and Text 2 on Tuesday or Wednesday. Or, if you wish to send the first text before you read the book and the second after, that is ok too. For *Text to Talk*, the critical thing is for the texts to be **sent**; the exact timing of when they are sent is less important and is left up to the teacher.

The goal is to send all the texts for each Study. Even if you are not able to read a particular book, the parents will still appreciate receiving the texts and new words. For the purposes of our study, **it’s important that all are sent out**. For example, if you don’t read a particular book, please still talk about the words in class and send the texts home to the families.

You should aim to send out texts about **one or** **two** books (usually two) each week to cover all the books within one Study.

***While in Class***

Please spend time talking about the words in class with the children, during book-reading time or at other times during the school day. The more the children are exposed to the words, the better.

We often find that although children may be able to point to a picture of a new word and know what it is, they struggle expressing the word aloud or explaining what it means in conversation. Encourage your students to use the words in conversation with you and with their classmates.

**Why Did We Pick This Mix of Words?**

We picked words that we thought were accessible to parents and children, yet “challenging” enough that there would be opportunity for children to learn them.

We tried to choose words that had some range of difficulty. We know that some of the youngest children, or those just learning English, know very few of these words, while older children might know many of them already. However, all the children can benefit from practicing using them in conversation and using them in discussions. Look for opportunities for extension with your more advanced children.

We also tried to choose words that are more likely to appear in “Early Reader” books in Kindergarten, first, and second grade. Research shows that children who know what words mean have an easier time learning to read them. We hope that our Text to Talk children gain larger vocabularies and are thus able to have an easier time learning to read as they advance through elementary school. We also hope that their larger vocabularies allow them to get more out of other subjects such as Math, Science, and Social Studies.

**What Should Parents Do?**

Please encourage parents to talk about the words with their children. (Remind parents that this is **not** about reading the words.) Parents can do this by:

1. Explaining a word’s meaning
2. Asking questions about the words
3. Pointing out the words when they appear in a book, at home, or in the neighborhood
4. Making up guessing or “I Spy” games with the words
5. Encouraging children as they learn and use the new words in conversation.
6. Reviewing words over time
7. Being proud of what you have accomplished together!

**Starting Text to Talk: Initial Texts**

Begin by sending the following texts to your parents, reminding them of the program. (If you wish to modify these slightly, that is ok.) The messages that are sent by Remind must be short. Each paragraph below needs to be a separate message, so that it is short enough for the Remind program.

Hello Families! We are starting the Text to Talk program.

Text to Talk sends you words your child is learning in school, so that you can talk about those words with your child at home.

In Text to Talk, we want children to understand what the words mean and be able to talk about them. Children do not need to read the words.

There are many good ways to help your child learn the meaning of a new word. Four good ways include: Defining, Asking, Fun, and Review.

Defining means explaining what the word means. Asking means asking your child questions about the word. Fun means, make it fun!

Make up games with your child with the new word. Finally, review the words. Children need to review many times to remember word meanings.

Praise your child when he or she uses a new word and asks questions about new words. Thank you for being a Text to Talk parent!

A few times a week, I will send you the words we are learning in class. Please ask your child about the words and help them understand.

Once you have sent these initial texts, you can start sending the texts for books in the current Study.