

PARENTS

Concept Words

What are concept words?

Concepts are words that tell us about location (i.e. in front of/behind), size (i.e. big/little), time (i.e. yesterday/tomorrow), prepositions (i.e. under) and sequential language (e.g. first, last).

Children who have difficulty learning new concepts need to be specifically taught this new vocabulary in context to support their understanding and use of language.

Strategies to develop your child's understanding of concept words**General Strategies**

Children learn concept words by experiencing them in the context of real situations. They will retain an understanding of a new concept if it is attached to a motivating experience.

Repetition and continuously modelling new vocabulary is the key to helping children to learn and use unfamiliar words.

Ideas for learning concepts

- Use one new concept repetitively in as many situations as you can.
- Get the child to experience the concept in a real situation. E.g. you comment on the location of your child using a concept word e.g. 'you're **under** the table'
- Get the child to use objects to represent the concept. E.g. put teddy **in** the box
- Get the child to select a picture which illustrates the concept. E.g. 'who is **first**?', 'who is **tall**'?

Activities to develop your child's understanding of concept words

- **I Spy**
Use the early developing concepts in this game. For example, you could say, "I spy something that is big." For more practice, encourage your child to use concepts when it is their turn.
- **Scavenger Hunt**
Give your child a bag to collect some items outside. Ask them to find you some different items: a **big** leaf, a **little** stick, two things the **same**, **long** string.
- **Barrier games**
Barrier games involve children having the same pictures or objects and a barrier (eg. a book or folder stood upright) in between them and their peers or siblings. The barrier can be removed to reduce the level of difficulty. Children or parents can give instructions about placing a picture or

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object somewhere (eg. 'put the big car on the square'). This task encourages the children to listen carefully to concept words. Everyone's pictures should look the same at the end. This can be played in pairs or with a group of children.

▪ **Obstacle course**

Place various objects around the room e.g. a hoop, a box, a chair, a bin, a box etc. Ask your child to follow an instruction e.g. 'jump over the box', 'stand on the box'. Gradually build up the number of instructions e.g. 'jump over the box and crawl through the hoop go!'.

Important concept words

| | Basic | Intermediate | Harder |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Prepositions | In On Under | Off Behind In front | Through Between Next to |
| Size | Big Little | Long Short Tall | |
| Comparisons | Same Not same | Different | |
| Questions | What What doing Who Where | When | Why |
| Sequential | First Next Last | Before After Then Night Day | Today Tomorrow Yesterday |

