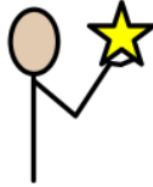


5.1 Understanding 'in', 'on' and 'under' at the simplest level



Why is this important?

Prepositions are words that describe the placement of objects. They are important in the development of relational concepts (i.e. describing where things are compared to others).

Children need to understand prepositions as words on their own before they can be understood in sentences incorporating more information-carrying words.



What to do

- Put out a box or jar (something with a lid).
- Give the child an object (e.g. brick) and ask the child to 'Put the brick 'in'/'on'/'under' the box'.
- Give the child another item and repeat the game.
- The child only has to understand the preposition in this task as you have given no choice of object (brick) or place (box).

5.2 Learning to remember and then say the names of two things



Why is this important?

Verbal understanding can be likened to a 'list' of things that need to be remembered in order to carry out a task. For example, in the two-word level instruction 'Give Sam a cup', the child has to remember 'Sam' and 'cup'. If children can't do this, it may be that their auditory memory is not yet sufficiently developed. Auditory memory can be improved with practice.



What to do

- Gather together a selection of pictures of everyday things.
These could be cards or cut out from magazines.
 - Place a few cards (e.g. six) face-down on the table.
 - Choose two cards but don't show them to the child.
- Look at your cards and say what they are (e.g. 'I've got a dog and a table').
 - Ask 'Can you remember what cards I've got?'
 - If the child is right, show your cards and reinforce:
'Well done! A dog and a table!'
- If the child finds it difficult or remembers just one item, repeat what cards you have, emphasising the key words (e.g. 'I've got dog and table').

5.3 Learning to play with a friend



Why is this important?

Social play is an important part of children learning to become sociable and develop friendships (i.e. realising that they are not alone in their environment – there are other people with feelings, needs and wants too!). Children increase in communicative confidence as new skills are practised by watching and playing with others in a relatively safe/familiar environment. Social play is key to social and emotional development.



What to do

- Engage two children in identical play at a table or on the floor. Activities could be drawing, sticking, puzzles.
 - Build a tower where both children have some bricks and take turns to put one on the tower. Start by guiding the activity and slowly move away to enable the children to continue.
- Equipment that requires two children (e.g. see-saws/double swings) are useful, as are toys that require 'help' (e.g. pushing each other in a car).
 - Play hide-and-seek or ball games.

5.4 Learning the names of colours



Why is this important?

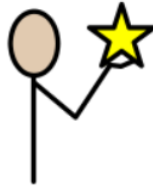
Colour names are adjectives often used to describe things. Children need to understand that colours are not inextricably linked to objects (e.g. trousers are not always blue). When children are able to match and sort objects according to colour, then they are ready to learn the colour names.



What to do

- Gather together some bricks or Lego blocks of four different colours (red, yellow, green and blue are ideal).
 - Put out the bricks – one of each colour.
 - Explain that you are going to build a tower together.
 - Ask the child for a brick by colour:
 - ★ 'Find the red brick.'
 - ★ 'Put the blue brick on.' etc.
 - Always make sure there's a choice of four colours and ask for the bricks in a random order.
- [Colour Sorting Online Game](#)

5.5 Learning the meaning of 'where'



Why is this important?

Wh- questions are an integral part of everyday conversations and routines (e.g. 'Where's your coat?'). Children need to be able to follow these instructions to be able to respond appropriately to questions and to move from a concrete to a more abstract level.



What to do

- Gather together some toys or objects and place them around the room.
- Encourage the child to find one item at a time by asking: 'Where's the ...?'
 - If the child can manage this, move on to the next item.
- If the child responds incorrectly (e.g. by naming the item retrieved rather than where it is), repeat the question and give the answer, e.g.
 - ★ Adult: 'Where's the ball?'
 - ★ Child: 'Ball.'
 - ★ Adult: 'Where's the ball? On the table.'
- You could also try repeating the question and then start to model a response for the child to complete, e.g.
 - ★ Adult: 'Where's the ball? The ball's on the ...?'

5.6 To encourage the use of three-word sentences



Why is this important?

As language develops, children need to be able to use more words to make longer sentences, using an increasingly varied vocabulary. This helps them combine vocabulary and grammar to express a wide range of meanings.



What to do

- Choose from one of the following:
 - ★ Teddy/doll or child's favourite toy and everyday objects (e.g. brush, cup, flannel).
 - ★ A book with lots of pictures of everyday scenes (e.g. children at the park, stories about going to the doctor/hairdressers).
 - ★ Pretend food and objects for a tea party.
- Start by describing what the child is doing (e.g. 'brushing doll's hair').
- Encourage the child to use three-word phrases by asking 'What are you doing?'
- If the child responds with a two-word phrase, 'add' another word to the sentence, e.g.
 - ★ Child is washing teddy's feet with a flannel.
 - ★ Adult: 'What are you doing?'
 - ★ Child: 'Wash feet.'
 - ★ Adult: 'Well done' and then adds '(You're) washing teddy's feet. Shall we wash something else?'
 - If the child doesn't respond, offer a choice, e.g.
- ★ Child and adult are looking at a book showing children playing in the park.
 - ★ Adult points at child on swing and says 'Look at that; what's she doing?'
 - ★ Child looks but doesn't say anything.
 - ★ Adult: 'Is the girl jumping on the bed or playing on the swing?'
 - ★ Child: 'Playing swing.'
- ★ Adult praises 'Good' and repeats or adds a word 'Girl playing swing'.
- Everyday routines often provide the best opportunities for learning.

5.7 Using 'under' in a simple game



Why is this important?

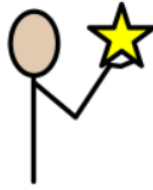
Prepositions are words that describe the position of an object (e.g. 'in', 'on', 'under', 'behind'). 'Under' falls within the first group that children learn.



What to do

- Gather together some toys and place them 'under' things around the room.
- As the child finds something, he/she must say where it was, using the preposition (e.g. 'under' cup; 'under' bed).
- If the child uses the wrong preposition or doesn't respond, offer a choice (e.g. 'Is the car in the box or under the box?').
- When everything has been found, play the game again, this time with the child hiding the toys under things and telling you where to find them.
- 'Under' is easiest for some children because it has two syllables which you can emphasise as you speak – 'un-der'.

5.8 Beginning to use 'what' and 'where'



Why is this important?

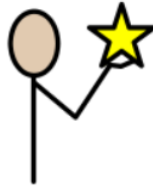
Children need to ask questions to become active learners (i.e. to take part in their own learning). It is a critical tool in facilitating problem-solving too.



What to do

- What?
 - ★ Share a book and take it in turns to point to something and ask 'What is it?'
 - ★ At snack-time (either with other children or pretend with toys) ask the child/toys 'What shall we have to drink?'
 - ★ Put puzzle pieces/toys/pictures into a bag. Take it in turns to take one out and say 'What have I got?'
- Where?
 - ★ Again, share a book, taking it in turns to ask 'Where's the ...?' and then find it on the page.
 - ★ Sort the clean washing together: put it into piles of socks, pants, trousers, etc. or Mummy's, Daddy's, boy's, etc. Take it in turns to choose something from the basket and say 'Where (do the) pants go?'
 - ★ Use a variety of toys such as a doll's house and furniture, farmyard and animals, playground and children, etc. Take it in turns to choose an item (e.g. bed) and ask 'Where (does the) bed go?'

5.9 Understanding what things are for



Why is this important?

Children begin to be able to categorise things into groups by learning their functions (e.g. things to eat, wear, drive). This also helps acquire more vocabulary.



What to do

- Gather together some familiar toys/objects:
 - ★ Cup, brush, apple, chair, hat, pencil.
 - Start by putting out two things and ask the child to find an object by its function:
 - ★ 'What do we eat?'
 - ★ 'What can we sit on?'
 - ★ 'What do we wear?'
- N.B. Remember not to look at or point to the object for which you are asking.
- Guide the child to the right choice if you need to. Repeat the instruction and demonstrate the function (e.g. 'Sit doll on the chair', 'Pretend to eat the apple').

5.10 Using simple plurals/plural forms



Why is this important?

Children need to understand and use plurals to be able to identify and describe more than one of something (e.g. duck vs. ducks; house vs. houses). It is fine for children to over-generalise the rule to begin with (e.g. 'fishes', 'breads').



What to do

- Make a scrapbook together.
- On one page, put a picture of an object and on the other page, put a picture of several objects (e.g. one dog on one side; lots of dogs on the other page).
 - Either draw, print out, cut out, use stencils, etc. to prepare the pictures.
 - Whilst the child is drawing/sticking, take the opportunity to refer to 'dog'/'dogs'.
- Talk about what you can see in the pictures, encouraging the child to say 'a dog'/'lots of dogs'.