

Understanding and Using Concept Words

Some words are easy for a child to learn. These are the names of everyday items (nouns). Other words are concept words which are harder to understand. We tend to avoid teaching concept words until the child has learnt a wide range of everyday nouns and verbs. Examples of concept words include concepts of size such as *big* and *little* and concepts of position such as *on*, *in* and *under*.

General advice:

- Use everyday toys and objects that your child is already interested in.
- Place extra emphasis on the concept word when saying it.
- Repeat the concept word several times and in several situations.
- Try not to work on too many concepts at a time as this can confuse your child.
- Use simple signs and gestures to demonstrate the meaning of the word.
- Look at books and comment on what you can see (e.g. “big dog, little dog”)
- Use everyday situations and give your child choices e.g. do you want the big hat or this one?



Example of a Therapy session/s focusing on the concept ‘on’

Choose a toy and place it on a table and say ‘look teddy is on the table’.

Then move the teddy and say ‘teddy is on the chair’.

To keep your child interested in the activity make it silly e.g. put the teddy on your head or on your child’s tummy.

When you have given lots of examples ask your child to choose where the teddy goes next and then comment on what they have done e.g. ‘look you have put teddy on the book’.

When you think your child is beginning to show understanding of the concept ask your child to put the teddy on several items.

Once your child can consistently place items correctly on different things it is time to help your child use the new concept word. You can do this by putting the teddy on another object and asking the child where you have put him.

