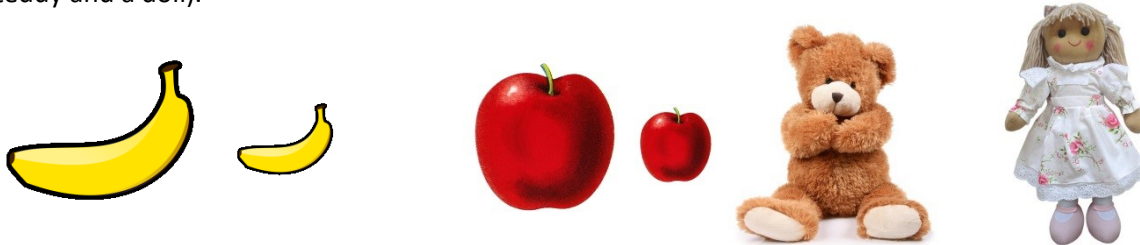


How to...

Develop a child's understanding of instructions containing 3 key words

3 key word level instructions are instructions where there are choices for three of the words – the child needs to understand the meaning of three of the words in the instruction to be able to follow it accurately.

For example: “**Give the little banana to the teddy” is a 3 key word level instruction if there are a choice of food items (e.g. an apple and a banana), a choice of sizes for these food items (big/little) and a choice of characters (e.g. a teddy and a doll).**



The following activities can be used to practise following instructions at this level:

1. Tea party

Find a teddy and a doll, or choose two characters that the child likes (e.g. Superman and Spiderman). Have a selection of food items available – have a big and little version of each. Give instructions like:

“Give teddy a little plate” “Give Spiderman a big banana” “Give the little cake to the doll”

You could do a similar activity with objects of different colours:

“Give teddy a yellow book” “Give Spiderman a green plate”

You could also give similar instructions at snack times/meal times e.g. “**Give mummy a green bowl” – remember, you need to have choices available for the underlined words for this to be a 3 key word level instruction e.g. there would need to be more than one person, and more than one item to choose from, and more than one colour option for each item.**

2. Animal actions

Collect a range of toy animals - have a big and little version of each. Encourage the child to make the animals perform actions e.g.

“Make big elephant jump” “Make little cat sleep” “Make big tiger eat”

3. Tidy up time

Use tidy up time as an opportunity to practise following instructions with positional words 'on' and 'under', like:

"Put dolly under the chair" "Put the book on the table" "Put the brick under the box"

Note: you will need to change where the items go each time, otherwise the child may rely on their memory of 'where things go', and won't need to focus on the language you are using.

4. Colouring

Draw a picture of a boy and a girl – add the same items of clothing to each e.g. so they are each wearing trousers, a t-shirt, boots and a hat. Give instructions for the child to colour the pictures e.g.

"Colour the boy's boots green" "Colour the girl's hat yellow"

Top tips for working on 3 key word level instructions:

- Check that the child understands the vocabulary you are using first – e.g. if you are working on instructions containing actions, then check they understand the actions individually first. Check that they understand concepts like big/little, on/under before using these in instructions.
- Avoid looking or pointing at the items, so that the child needs to rely on their listening.
- If the child finds it difficult to follow instructions at this level:
 - Use gestures or signs to support their understanding of the key words.
 - Model the activity first
 - Repeat the instruction – if they continue to find it difficult, demonstrate what to do.
 - Make sure you give praise for trying.
 - If they continue to find it difficult, step the instruction down by removing one of the choices e.g. if the instruction is 'colour the girl's hat yellow', only have the picture of the girl available, so that this becomes a two key word level instruction - the only choices are which item of clothing to colour, and which colour to use.

Additional information:

For further information please contact Paediatric.services@acecic.nhs.uk or call ACE paediatric services on 01206 588100

Additional resources:

<https://www.talkingpoint.org.uk>

<https://www.gl-assessment.co.uk/products/wellcomm/>

<https://www.elklan.co.uk/under-5s/early-language-builders>

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/>

<https://www.blacksheepress.co.uk/product/sentence-builder-expressive-skills/>

<http://www.clear-resources.co.uk/ClearProductsPage.html>

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/splingos-language-universe/id457526530>

<http://www.stass.co.uk/publications/language-steps>

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