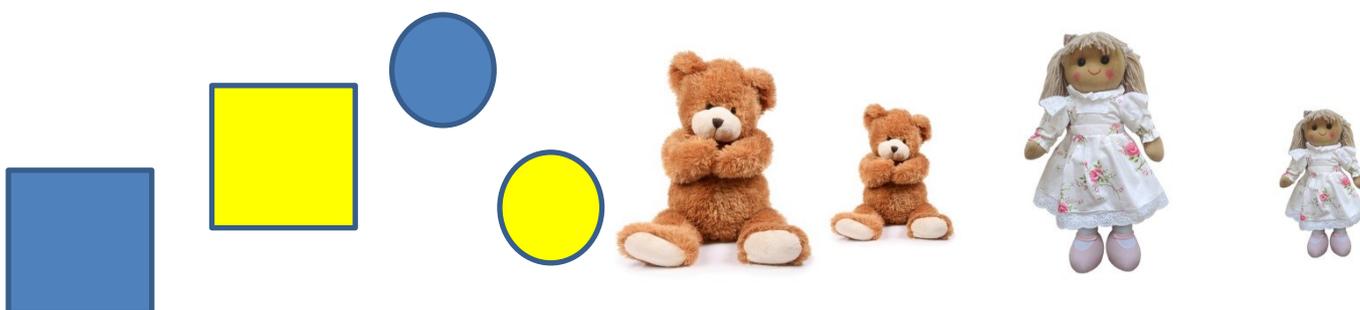


How to...

Develop a child's understanding of instructions containing 4 key words

4 key word level instructions are instructions where there are choices for four of the words – a child needs to understand four of the words within the instruction to be able to follow it correctly. For example:

“Give the yellow box to the big teddy” is a 4 key word level instruction if there are a choice of objects, each with a choice of different colours, a choice of characters (e.g. a teddy and a doll) and a choice of sizes for those characters.



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 big and little version of each. Have a selection of food items available. Give instructions like:

“Give a banana and apple to the little teddy” “Give big Spiderman a cake and a pizza” “Give the cake and the doughnut to the little doll”

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, and now add in a location e.g. a table and a chair

“Make big elephant jump on the table” “Make little cat sleep on the chair” “Make big tiger sit on the table”

3. Positions

This time, include the positional words on/under – have a range of toy animals, and a big/little version of each. Find a chair and a table.

“Put little cat under the table” “Put big monkey on the chair”

4. Tidy up time

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

“Put dolly and the book under the chair” “Put the book and the boat on the table”

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.

Top tips for working on 4 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, step the instruction down by removing one of the choices e.g. if the instruction is “**Give the banana and apple to little teddy”**, step this down by only giving one item of food e.g. “**Give the banana to little teddy”**

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/springos-language-universe/id457526530>

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

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