

CONCEPTS

Learning concepts can be difficult because every time we use concept words we are talking about different objects or events.

Which concepts should I teach?:

Table (A) gives a guide to the general order that concepts can develop in. The table starts with easier concepts and then moves onto more difficult ones so you can work through the table.

- You can choose concepts that you have noticed the child is struggling with e.g. they picked up a **different** brick when you asked them to get one the **same**.

Or

- You may want to teach other concepts not included in the table that are related to a current classroom topic i.e.. **sink/float** in science.

Or

- Your Speech and Language Therapist can discuss with you what concepts are age-appropriate for the child you are working with.

Table (A) – General guide to the order concepts can develop

1	big/little	1 6	large/small	3 1	finish/start
2	hot/cold	1 7	first/last	3 2	all/none
3	wet/dry	1 8	heavy/light	3 3	together/apart
4	in/on/under	1 9	rough/smooth/sharp	3 4	whole/half
5	happy/sad	2 0	open/close	3 5	end/middle
6	dirty/clean	2 1	top/bottom	3 6	more/less
7	soft/hard	2 2	down/up	3 7	wide/narrow

8	full/empty	2 3	near/far	3 8	many/few
9	fast/slow	2 4	light/dark	3 9	towards/away from
1 0	quiet/noisy	2 5	wrong/right	4 0	corner/centre
1 1	long/short	2 6	before/after	4 1	in order
1 2	behind/in front/next to	2 7	above/below	4 2	pair
1 3	same/different	2 8	difficult/easy	4 3	as many as
1 4	tall/short	2 9	old/new	4 4	equal
1 5	outside/inside	3 0	early/late	4 5	if

How do I teach concepts?:

Below are activities to teach different concepts. We tend to teach concepts in opposites e.g. hot/cold; same/different, before/after. Choose one concept to teach at a time. When the child understands the concept introduce another one. Make activities as 'hands on' for the child as possible so they can experience the concept. The child will also need to practise understanding their new concept in everyday situations.

Activities have been split into:

- size, comparison, texture and material concepts
- time and sequence concept.
- direction and position concepts
- quantity concepts

Size, Comparison, Texture and Material Concepts:

Some examples of these concepts:

big/little	happy/sad	rough/smooth/sharp
dirty/clean	hot/cold	open/close
soft/hard	wet/dry	long/short
full/empty	same/different	heavy/light
fast/slow	tall/short	large/small
quiet/loud	light/dark	wide/narrow

Activities:

- **Feely bag**
Collect real objects that show the concept you are trying to teach.

Put the objects in a bag, take turns to take an object out of the bag and talk about it.
- **Sorting**
Sort the objects into the 2 groups, e.g. long/short.
- **Can you find.....?**
Go round the room looking for items that fit the concept.
- **Acting out**

'Act out' the concept if you can e.g. go in the playground and walk *fast* or *slow*, make your hands *dirty* by putting them in mud then wash them so they are *clean*, get some instruments and play them *loudly* or *quietly*. The aim of these activities is to give the child direct experience of the concept so be creative!

- **Craft Activities**

Draw, paint or make out of play dough, objects that fit the concept description e.g. tall and short people, big and little animals.

- **Scrapbook**

Make a scrapbook of new concepts, stick in pictures you have drawn or cut out from catalogues, and stick in objects e.g. long and short bits of string.

- **Reading a book**

When the child is reading a book talk about the pictures using the new concept e.g. 'do you think that man's *happy* or *sad*?' 'Can you find the *tall* tree?'

- **Instructions**

Give the child instructions using the new concepts 'Can you bring me a *little* ball from the box?'

Quantity concepts:

Some examples of quantity concepts:

all/none	pair	whole/half
more/less	as many as	
many/few	equal	

Activities:

- **Objects**

Give a clear example using objects. Collect some bricks or pencils and use them to demonstrate to the child e.g. 'I have lots of bricks I have **many**, you have 2 bricks you have a **few**.'

Repeat the task with lots of different objects so the child understands it is the amount that we are talking about not the specific objects.

Use objects the child likes to keep their interest e.g. trains, dinosaurs, or pictures of characters from a favourite television programme.

- **Craft activities**
Draw, paint or make out of play dough objects that fit the concept description e.g. **half** an orange, a **pair** of socks.
- **Reading a book**
When the child is reading a book talk about the pictures using the new concept e.g. 'Can you find **all** of the birds?' 'Which room has the **most** people in?'
- Use the words to talk about what's happening in the classroom e.g. 'John has **more** pencils.'
- **Instructions**
Give the child instructions using the new concepts 'Can you bring me **all** the rulers?'

Direction and position concepts:

Some examples of direction and position concepts:

in/on/under	near/far	above/below
behind/in front/next to	down/up	towards/away from
top/bottom	outside/inside	corner/centre

Activities:

- **Acting out**
Show the new concept by 'acting it out' with the child e.g. sit **on** or **under** the table; walk **towards** or **away from** each other. Talk about what you are doing using lots of repetition of the new words.
- **Toys**
Collect some toys/objects together. Show and describe the concept e.g. 'teddy is **behind** the chair' 'the pencil is **in** the box.' Give the child an instruction to follow e.g. 'put the mouse **on** the box', 'make teddy walk **up** the stairs'

- **Longer instructions**

When the child can follow short instructions with the new concept try mixing the concepts together and giving longer instructions e.g. 'put the spoon and the car in the cup' 'put teddy on the chair and dolly under the table.'

- **Craft activities**

Draw, paint or make out of play dough objects that fit the concept description e.g. someone **inside** a house, a monkey at the **top** of a tree.

- **Reading a book**

When the child is reading a book talk about the pictures using the new concept e.g. 'What can you see **behind** the tree?' 'Is the dog **inside** or **outside**?'

- Use the words to talk about what's happening in the classroom e.g. 'Harry is **next to** you in the line'

- **Instructions**

Give the child instructions using the new concepts 'Put your bag on the table.'

: