

# Talking Matters

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Helping your child to reach their potential



## Goal: Concepts 'in front' & 'behind'

To develop the ability to understand and then use the concept words 'in front' and 'behind'.

The concepts 'in front' and 'behind' are later developing in children. It is best to teach the two concepts together to compare the difference between them. By learning these concepts your child will be able to understand instructions and will be useful for your child as they begin to use more descriptive language.

### Understanding the concepts in front/behind:

- Understanding a concept comes before a child can use a concept. Therefore, we need to ensure the child can understand the concept we are teaching before they can use it.
- Begin with a real experience of the concept e.g. use a door and talk about being behind or in front of the door, you can incorporate their toys into this activity "put the doll in front of the door" or "put the truck behind the door" etc.
- Once your child has mastered this, move onto pictures or photos. Beginning with the adult sorting objects or pictures into either 'in front' or 'behind' categories, whilst modeling the concept word.

Next the child sorts objects or pictures, while the adult models the concept word. For example, using pictures of animals 'in front' or 'behind' objects and ask them to sort the pictures whilst saying "frog in front /frog behind".

- Next the child sorts and imitates what you say.
- Then the child sorts and says the concept word by himself. If he/she is not correct, model the correct word and ask them to copy you.
- Finally the child practices the structure in information carrying words games or barrier games.



Below are some ideas to use in everyday situations (remember frequent practice is the key):

- Talk to your child when they are playing hide and seek “you’re not in front of the couch are you behind the couch?”
- Make a collage with your child, sticking on ‘in front’ and ‘behind’ pictures of things you find in junk mail, magazines or print off of the internet.
- Look at items you find in the environment and commenting on where they are for example “look those boys behind the tree and those ones looking for them in front of the tree”. By making sure you have an ‘in front’ and ‘behind’ item to compare you will avoid confusing your child.
- When you are packing things away i.e. toys or groceries, talk about where to put them “behind the bread” “in front of the cans” etc.



### Using the concepts in front/ behind:

Once your child is able to understand the concepts ‘in front’ and ‘behind’ the next step is for your child to use the concepts in their language.

#### Step 1

- **Imitation:** Have your child repeat the phrase containing the target concept after you.  
e.g. Adult “This dog is in front of the tree, where is the dog?”
- **Forced choice:** Present the child with two choices and encourage him/her to say the correct answer.  
e.g. Adult “Is this bird in front or behind the cage?”
- **Sentence completion:** Have your child complete a sentence starter which you provide.  
e.g. point to a child. Adult “this child is...”  
child “in front”
- **Forming sentences:** Ask your child questions which prompt him/her to use the new concept in their response.  
e.g. point to the dog whilst saying “Where is the dog?”

At this point your child is able to spontaneously use the concept in front and behind. Encourage their use of this structure in barrier games with ‘in front’ and ‘behind’ concepts. Reinforce their use of the concepts ‘in front’ and ‘behind’ when they are giving you instructions in the game.