

# Talking Matters

[www.talkingmatters.com.au](http://www.talkingmatters.com.au) Ph: 8255 7137  
*Helping your child to reach their potential*



## Goal: Concept Words

To develop the ability to understand and use concept words

*Concept words are important to understand so that instructions can be followed accurately and information can be passed on clearly and specifically.*

### Concepts include:

#### Position concepts

- 2 to 3 years: on, off, in, out, up, down, under, top, open, shut
- 3 to 4 years: bottom, behind, first, near
- 4 1/2 years: middle, around, away from, between, through, next to, beside, last
- 4 1/2 to 5 years: in front, in a line, corner

#### Size concepts

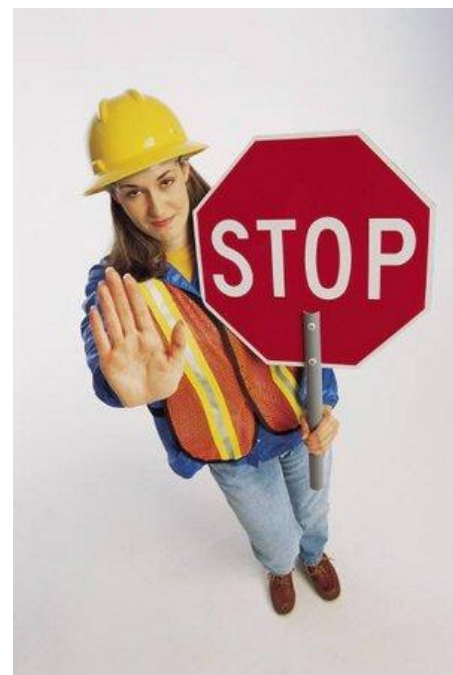
- 2 to 3 years: big, small/little, long
- 3 to 4 years: short (length and height)
- 4 1/2 years: tall, fat
- 4 1/2 to 5 years: thin

#### Quantity

- 2 to 3 years: one, two
- 3 to 4 years: three, every, none
- 4 1/2 years: four, most, few
- 4 1/2 to 5 years: five, pair

#### Other concepts

- 2 to 3 years: stop, start, loud, quiet, heavy, soft, fast
- 3 to four years: hard, slow, light(weight)
- 4 to 5 years: same, different



### Teaching Concepts:

- Begin with the adult sorting objects or pictures while modeling the concept word. For example you might begin by putting big animals in a big box and small animals in a small box while saying “**big bear, small dog**” etc
- Next the child sorts objects or pictures, while the adult models the concept word. For example the child might put the animals into big and little boxes while you say “ big bear, small dog” etc
- Next the child sorts and imitates what you say.
- Then the child sorts and says the concept word by himself. If he is not correct to model the correct word and ask him to copy you.
- Finally the child practices the structure in information carrying words games or barrier games.

**Modelling concept words in real situations:**

1. Model these words as they occur in your child's real life experiences for example, "you are getting in the bath, you are climbing over the fence, put on your blue shirt, find your big teddy". etc.
2. Talk about these words as your child observes other people in kindergarten, in television and books. "Look, Sam has a red shirt, Jack is climbing over the log, Caitlin has the little pencil."
3. Play games asking your child to place the objects in the position you ask, "put the car in the box, put the biscuit on the blue plate."
5. When he/she can perform these tasks with you in a small structured situation, see if he/she can follow tasks in everyday activities. For example "Put your bottle in your bag". Begin with logical positions but try later illogical ones, for example, "put your bottle under your bag".
6. Playgrounds and kindergym are good places to model concept words as your child moves in, over, under and through the equipment. You could also make an indoor obstacle course with chairs, tables, boxes and blankets.
7. Books about concepts such as colours, shapes and numbers as well as flap books such as "spot books" are often good for talking about concept words.
8. Barrier games are also good for working on position words. With a screen between yourself and your child take it in turns to describe what you are creating on the other side of the screen, so the other person can copy, eg: building with blocks, setting up farm yard, placing pictures onto a scene etc. Each person must have the same items on each side of the screen. If the instructions were correct the creation on each side of the screen should be the same when the screen is removed.



**Teaching concept words**  
Talking Matters  
Last Modified August 2010

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## Goal: concept 'in & out'

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

The concepts 'in' and 'out' are amongst the first concepts a child develops. It is best to teach the two concepts together to compare the difference between the concepts. 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/out:

- 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 box and talk about putting toys in and out of the box "put the doll in the box" or "take the truck out of the box" etc.
- Once your child has mastered this, move onto pictures or photos. Beginning with the adult sorting objects or pictures into either 'in' or 'out' 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 a dog in a kennel and a dog out of a kennel etc. and ask them to sort the pictures whilst saying "dog in/dog out".
- 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): to your child when you are packing things away, for example putting toys in a toy box.

- Make a collage with your child, sticking on 'in' and 'on' 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 at girl in the cubby house and the other girl out of the cubby house". By making sure you have a 'in' and an 'out' item to compare you will avoid confusing your child.
- Find the song "Hokey pokey" and get your child to dance to the song and highlight the use of 'in' and 'out'.

### Using the concepts in/ out:

Once your child is able to understand the concepts in/out 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 the kennel, 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 or out of the birdcage?"
- **Sentence completion:** Have your child complete a sentence starter which you provide.  
e.g. point to the dog. Adult "this dog is..."  
child "in the kennel"
- **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/out. Encourage their use of this structure in barrier games with 'in' and 'out' concept. Reinforce their use of the concepts 'in' and 'out' when they are giving you instructions in the game.

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## Goal: Concepts 'on' and 'under'

To develop the ability to understand and then use the concept words 'on' and 'under'.

The concepts 'on' and 'under' are amongst the first concepts a child develops. It is best to teach the two concepts together so the child is able to compare. By learning these concepts your child will better understand instructions and will begin to use more descriptive language.

### Understanding the concepts on/under:

- Understanding a concept comes before a child uses a concept word in their own speech. Therefore, we need to build the child's understanding of the meaning first.
- Begin with a real experience of the concept e.g. use a chair and put toys on and under the chair while explaining what you are doing "doll on the chair" or "truck under the chair" etc.
- Once your child has mastered this, move onto pictures or photos. Begin with the adult sorting objects or pictures into either 'on' or 'under' categories, whilst modeling the concept word.
- Next the child sorts objects or pictures, while the adult models the concept word. For example, use pictures of a cars on a bridge and cars under a bridge and have the child sort the pictures whilst the adult says "cars on, cars under".
- Next the child sorts and imitates what the adult says.
- Then the child sorts and says the concept word by himself. If he/she is not correct, the adult models the correct word and asks the child to copy them.
- 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:

- Place a toy on the table and say to the child "the toy is on the table" or place a toy under a box and say "the toy is under the box"



- Make a collage with your child, sticking 'on' and 'under' pictures of things you find in junk mail, magazines or print off of the internet.
- Look at items you find in the environment and comment on where they are for example "look at the girl on the slide and the boy under the slide". By making sure you have a 'on' and an 'under' concept to compare you will avoid confusing your child.



- Use their toys and comment on where they are "the train is going under the bridge, now the train is on the bridge".

### Using the concepts on/under:

Once your child is able to understand the concepts 'on' and 'under' the next step is for your child to use the concepts in their language.

### Moving from most supportive to least supportive

- **Imitation:** Have your child repeat the phrase containing the target concept after you.  
e.g. Adult "This teddy is on the chair, where is the teddy?"
- **Forced choice:** Present the child with two choices and encourage him/her to say the correct answer.  
e.g. Adult "Is the teddy on or under the chair?"
- **Sentence completion:** Have your child complete a sentence starter which you provide.  
e.g. point to a girl on the slide. Adult "this girl is..."  
child "on the slide"
- **Forming sentences:** Ask your child questions which prompt him/her to use the new concept in their response.  
e.g. point to the teddy whilst saying "Where is the teddy?"  
child "under the table"

When your child is able to spontaneously use the concept 'on' and 'under', encourage their use of this structure in barrier games with 'on' and 'under' concept. Reinforce their use of the concepts 'on' and 'under' when they are giving you instructions in the game.

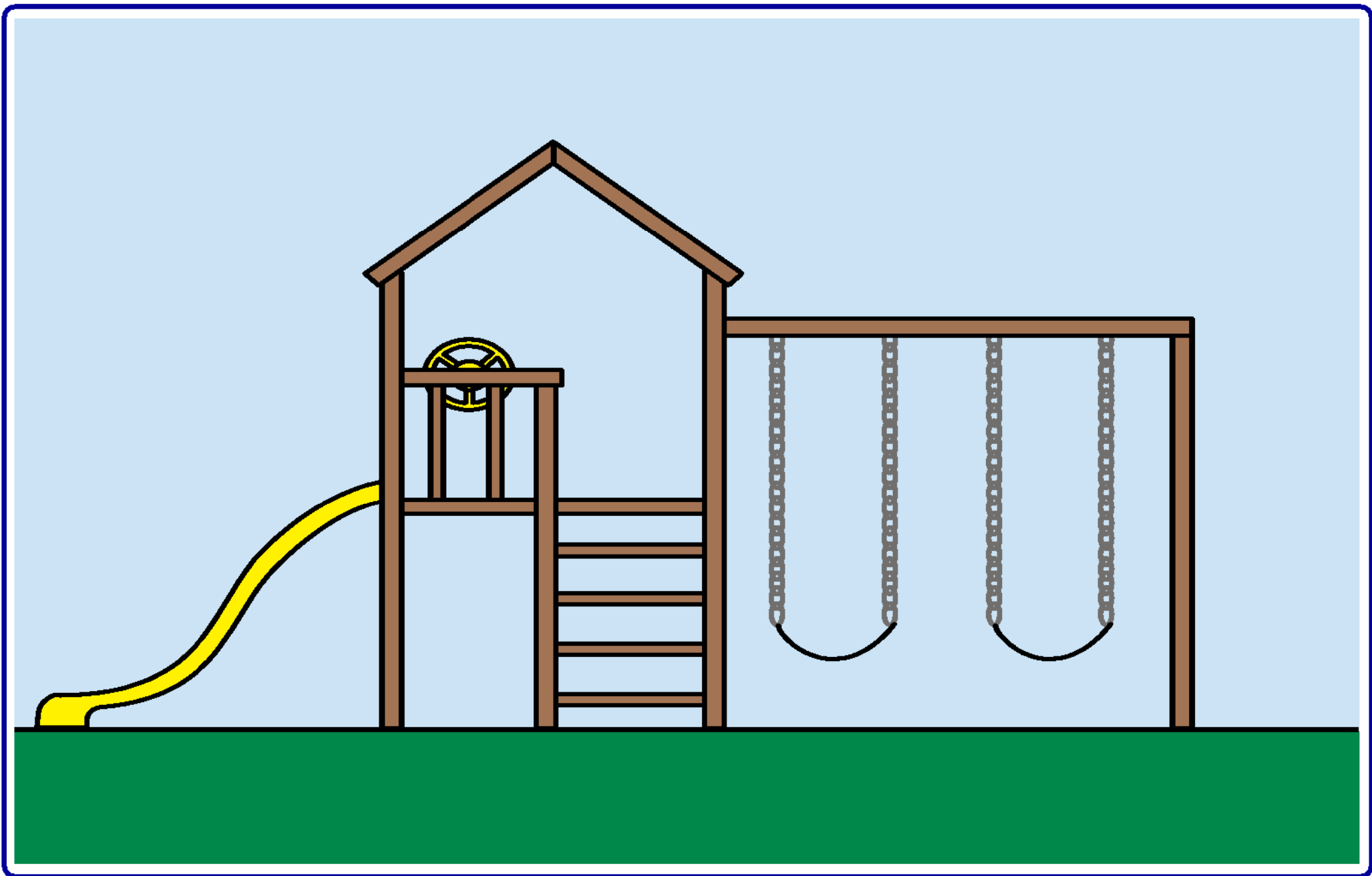


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# In, on, off, under, next to

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boy



boy



lady



bride



bridegroom



girl



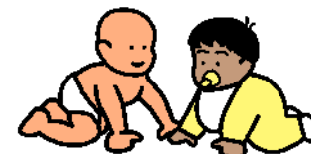
girl in wheelchair



man



babies



Cub Scout



farmer



girl



person



teenage boys



teenage girls



Instructions on the purpose and how to use this game are explained on the attached information sheet.

You may need to show your child what to do many times to help them be successful and remember to keep it fun for your child. Your interest and engagement are vital. Your speech pathologist can show you how to use this game with your child if you are unsure.