

# Talking Matters

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Helping your child to reach their potential



## 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.