

Talking Matters

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Helping your child to reach their potential



Goal: concept 'tall' & 'short'

To develop the ability to understand and then use the concept words 'tall' and 'short'.

The concepts 'tall' and 'short' are later developing in a child. 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 tall/short:

- 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 toys which depict tall and short “put the tall doll in the box” or “put the short doll in the box” etc.
- Once your child has mastered this, move onto pictures or photos. Beginning with the adult sorting objects or pictures into either 'tall' or 'short' 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 short and tall animals and asking them to sort the pictures whilst saying “tall giraffe/short monkey”
- 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.



Tall and Short
 Last Modified 8/11/10

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

- Talk to your child about making yourself as tall as you can and then as short as you can.
- Make a collage with your child, sticking on 'tall' and 'short' 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 there is a tall boy next to a short girl". By making sure you have a 'tall' and 'short' item to compare you will avoid confusing your child.
- Look at animals at the zoo and talk about the giraffe having a long tall neck and the short monkeys.



Using the concepts tall/ short:

Once your child is able to understand the concepts tall/short 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 giraffe is tall, what is the giraffe?"
- **Forced choice:** Present the child with two choices and encourage him/her to say the correct answer.
e.g. Adult "Is this monkey short or tall?"
- **Sentence completion:** Have your child complete a sentence starter which you provide.
e.g. point to a picture of a tall alien. Adult "this alien is..."
child "tall"
- **Forming sentences:** Ask your child questions which prompt him/her to use the new concept in their response.
e.g. point to other short alien "what is this alien?"

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