

Sections 2.1 and 2.2

Understanding single words

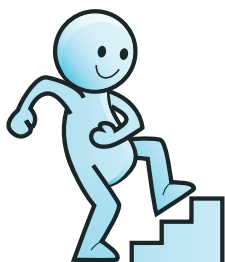


Why is this important?

Children learn that things have names by hearing the names lots of times throughout the day. Children learn these words best in their everyday environment and through play and need to hear the words many times before they begin to understand (and then use) them.

What to do

- Encourage the child to point to or find the things that you say:
 - ★ 'Find (the) *teddy*/*ball*/*car*.'
 - ★ 'Show me your *nose*/*feet*.'
 - ★ 'Where's your *shoe*'?
- Try this with pictures too when looking at a book together – encourage the child to point as you name 'Let's find the *apple*'.
- Action words (verbs) – talk about what you are both doing (e.g. running, jumping, washing, sleeping, eating).
- Gather together some toys (e.g. teddy, cup, book, spoon, brush). Ask the child to:
 - ★ 'Make teddy read the *book*.'
 - ★ '*Brush* teddy.'
 - ★ 'Give teddy a *drink*.'
- Hide objects around the room and say 'Let's find the one we ...'
 - ★ '*Drink* out of' (cup).
 - ★ '*Eat* with' (spoon).
 - ★ '*Wash* with' (flannel).
- Make a post box: put out three pictures on the table and ask the child to post the item (e.g. 'Post the *ball*').
- As a child watches, put some toys around the room (no more than five). Then, one at a time, encourage the child to find them.
- Play a shopping game with toys or food items. Ask the child to buy one item at a time from a choice of up to three.
- When playing with a picture inset puzzle, put in one piece from a choice of three (e.g. 'Find the car' from a choice of 'car', 'ball' and 'dog').
- When washing clothes and putting things away, ask the child to fetch one item at a time.
- Draw a simple picture (e.g. a face). Ask the child to put a sticker on a part of the face, e.g.
 - ★ 'Put it on his *nose*.'



Step up

- Ask the child for more than one thing at a time (e.g. 'Find car and dog').
- Extend the child's knowledge of words by asking for less familiar things (e.g. when shopping, ask the child to find the 'plum'; or when pointing to body parts ask for 'knee' or 'neck').
- Encourage the child to copy single words and give lots of praise for trying!

Step down

- Use a gesture/sign with the single word.
- Use lots and lots of repetition.
- When asking a child to find an item from a selection, reduce the number to two items, so the choice is between the one you name and only one other.
- Use real things to begin with – some children find these easier than pictures.
- If a child can't make the right choice, do it together.
- Guide the child's hand towards the right choice.

