

Other things to try: 4a

Understanding three key words (i)



Why is this important?

Children need to gradually increase the amount of information they can take in at any one time as they learn to respond to longer and more complex instructions. These activities can easily form part of everyday routines. As adults, we give these kinds of instructions without even thinking about them, but we need to consider the language level we use (for more help with this, refer to the *WellComm Handbook*).

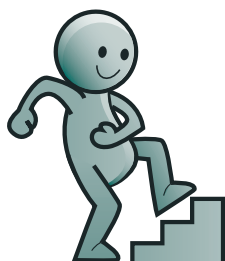
Here are three variations on the theme of helping children to understand three key words:

What to do

- Gather together the following toys/objects:
 - ★ Doll, monkey (or alternative toy characters)
 - ★ Two boxes, two bags and a variety of objects
- Place a box and a bag in front of each of the toy characters. Explain 'This is doll's box and bag; this is monkey's box and bag'.
- Put out two–three objects and encourage the child to listen and follow the instructions you give using three key words:
 - ★ 'Put the *brush* in *monkey's box*.'
 - ★ 'Put the *key* in *doll's bag*.'
 - ★ 'Put the *pencil* in *monkey's bag*.'

N.B. If you are checking three-word level understanding, remember not to look at, point to or give any visual clues when showing the child what you want him/her to do.

- If a child can't manage the task, repeat the instruction, and then gently guide him/her to the right toys. Give the instruction again as the child copies or is shown what to do.



Step up

- Reduce the number of signs and gestures used.
- Add more objects to choose from (four, five or six) to put into the box/bag.
- Include another character (e.g. toy dog) who also has a box and a bag.
- Encourage the child to tell you what he/she has done.

Step down

- Use gestures/signs alongside the key words.
- Give the child an object (e.g. key, cup) and say:
 - ★ 'Put the key in *teddy's box*.'
 - ★ 'Put the cup in *doll's bag*.'
- To do this, the child needs to understand two elements only. Once he/she can consistently do this, return to the original activity.
- Show a photograph of the desired outcome and emphasise what you want the child to do.

