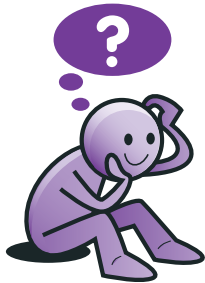


Section 5.1

Understanding 'in', 'on' and 'under' at the simplest level



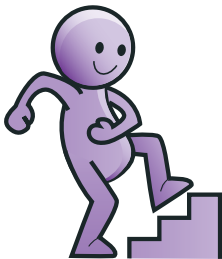
Why is this important?

Prepositions are words that describe the placement of objects. They are important in the development of relational concepts (i.e. describing where things are compared to others). Children need to understand prepositions as words on their own before they can be understood in sentences incorporating more information-carrying words.

What to do

- Put out a box or jar (something with a lid).
- Give the child an object (e.g. brick) and ask the child to 'Put the brick 'in'/'on'/'under' the box'.
- Give the child another item and repeat the game.
- The child only has to understand the preposition in this task as you have given no choice of object (brick) or place (box).

Step up



- Reduce the number of gestural cues.
- Add more items so the child has to choose from the object (e.g. key and spoon) and the positional word (e.g. 'in'/'on'/'under').
- Encourage the child to *say* where the items are (e.g. 'in'/'on'/'under' the box).
- Start to include other positional vocabulary (e.g. 'behind'/'in front').
- Reverse roles so the child has to tell you where to put an object.
- Share books and talk about where things are.
- Do this during daily routines around the house or when out and about.
- Play games where toys are being silly and put things in silly places (e.g. teddy puts a sock on his head, monkey puts the spoon 'in' the bath).

Step down

- Use signs/gestures to go with the preposition.
- Repeat the instruction, emphasising the preposition and guiding the child's hand to place the brick 'in'/'on'/'under' the box.
- Give the child the item and simply say the positional word (e.g. 'in').
- Practise one preposition at a time. For example, walk around the house putting objects 'in' things (e.g. put doll 'in' the bath, put the pencil 'in' the cup). Talk about the placement of objects (e.g. 'The cake is 'in' the oven', 'The spoon is 'in' the drawer').

