

Section 5.5

Learning the meaning of 'where'

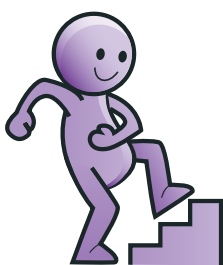


Why is this important?

Wh- questions are an integral part of everyday conversations and routines (e.g. 'Where's your coat?'). Children need to be able to follow these instructions to be able to respond appropriately to questions and to move from a concrete to a more abstract level.

What to do

- Gather together some toys or objects and place them around the room.
- Encourage the child to find one item at a time by asking: 'Where's the ...?'
- If the child can manage this, move on to the next item.
- If the child responds incorrectly (e.g. by naming the item retrieved rather than where it is), repeat the question and give the answer, e.g.
 - ★ Adult: 'Where's the ball?'
 - ★ Child: 'Ball.'
 - ★ Adult: 'Where's the ball? On the table.'
- You could also try repeating the question and then start to model a response for the child to complete, e.g.
 - ★ Adult: 'Where's the ball? The ball's on the ...?'



Step up

- Don't use any additional prompts (e.g. signs and symbols).
- Hide items and encourage the child to find them by responding to 'Where's ...?'
- Ask where things are kept which are not in the room (e.g. 'Where's your toothbrush?', 'Where are the pegs?').
- Tell a story about a character or characters visiting different places (e.g. a girl going to the shops to buy some items). At the end of the story ask 'where' questions (e.g. 'Where did the girl buy her trousers?', 'Where did the girl buy her shoes?', 'Where did the girl have lunch?').
- Use curriculum topics to focus on asking 'where' questions, e.g.
 - ★ Rooms in a house – 'Where do you go to sleep?'

- Use school topics to focus on asking 'where' questions, e.g.
 - ★ Vehicles – 'Where do you drive a car (land vs. sea vs. air)?'
 - ★ Food – 'Where do apples grow?'
 - ★ Clothes – 'Where do we put our gloves?'
- Make a cardboard template of a person and some cardboard clothes to stick to the template. For each of the clothes presented, ask where the item should go (e.g. 'Where do we wear socks?'). Help the child 'dress' the person. You could also play a dress-up game.

Step down

- Use a gesture or sign for 'where' when saying the target word.
- Introduce a picture/symbol as well as the gesture/sign. Point to the symbol as you ask the question – or even a written word.
- Model the correct response and ask the child to repeat.
- If the child points to 'where' the object was hidden, accept this and model the words yourself.

