

Section 6.3

Understanding the negative form

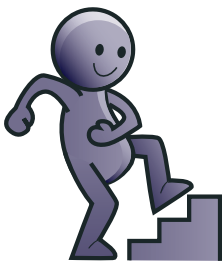


Why is this important?

Children begin to understand negatives with 'no' and 'not' and then progress to understanding the reduced form (e.g. 'isn't', 'can't' and 'don't').

What to do

- Gather together some pictures of children doing various actions (e.g. climbing, running, jumping, eating).
- Put out two pictures and ask:
 - ★ 'Who *isn't* eating?'
- When the child points to the right picture, reinforce this by repeating the sentence:
 - ★ 'Well done. He *isn't* eating. He's climbing.'
- Have another go with two new pictures.



Step up

- Encourage the child to *use* the negative form 'isn't'. Look at action pictures together and try:
 - ★ Adult: 'Who's eating?'
 - ★ Child points to the correct picture.
 - ★ Adult: 'That's right, he's *eating*. Is he *crying*?'
 - ★ Child: 'No.'
 - ★ Adult: 'Well done. He ...'
- (pause for child to finish sentence).
- ★ Child: '... isn't crying.'
- The child may use 'not' to begin with, which is fine: model the use of 'isn't' as frequently as possible throughout the day.
- Use action words that are similar (e.g. pushing/pulling, eating/drinking).

Step down

- Introduce the pictures first by talking about the action words to make sure that the vocabulary is familiar by asking 'Who's eating/climbing?'
- Replace 'isn't' with 'not' to begin with (e.g. 'Who's *not* climbing?')
- Use a sign/gesture for the negative or shake your head to give a non-verbal cue for the negative form. You can also use an exaggerated hand gesture for 'no'.
- Use action words that are very different (e.g. sleeping vs. jumping rather than drinking vs. eating).
- Use toys to demonstrate who isn't doing something (e.g. when the child is playing in the home corner, ask the child 'Who's sleeping?'/ 'Who isn't sleeping?').

