

Section 7.8

Understanding opposites: 'wet'/'dry'

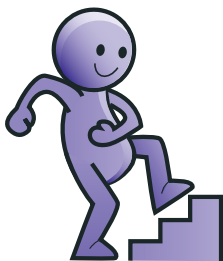


Why is this important?

Opposites are used to describe concepts (e.g. an oven is 'hot', a fridge is 'cold') whilst recognising that other words (e.g. 'warm', 'tepid', 'lukewarm') represent various positions on the continuum between these two poles. These linguistic concepts are important in developing cognitive skills too.

What to do

- Start by introducing one of the pair of concepts (e.g. 'wet').
- Take a trip round the house, park or school, talking about things that are wet (e.g. washing, rain, puddles, tap, hose, drinks, paint).
- Feel and talk about what 'wet' is like (e.g. wash your hands, jump in puddles, make hand-prints with wet paint).
- Think of 'wet' things with the child and draw them on a piece of paper. Make a collage of 'wet' things by printing/cutting out and sticking pictures.
- When the child is familiar with the word and concept 'wet', move on to learn 'dry', going through the same activities. Once 'wet' and 'dry' have been learnt individually, talk about them together (e.g. put the 'wet' washing on the line and it will 'dry'; wash your hands and then 'dry' them).



Step up

- Introduce a variety of less familiar concepts (e.g. 'hard'/'soft', 'rough'/'smooth') where a judgement has to be made.
- Think about concepts used in different aspects of the curriculum.

Step down

- Use signs/gestures to help understanding.
- Start with basic concepts that are easy to feel and experience (e.g. 'up'/'down', 'hot'/'cold', 'loud'/'quiet', 'big'/'little').
- Use objects that are the extremes of concepts (e.g. an elephant is always 'big' but a dog can be 'big' or 'little').
- When working on 'wet', begin by talking about things being 'wet' vs. 'not wet'. Remember this is a stage in the development of conceptual vocabulary. Once 'wet' is established, introduce the new concept 'dry'.
- Try to teach concepts that the child will come across in class topics.

