

## Section 8.1

# Learning the meaning of 'when'

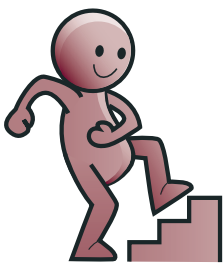


### Why is this important?

Wh- questions are an integral part of everyday conversations and routines. Children need to understand these structures to be able to respond appropriately. 'When' is probably the hardest of the question words because time generally can be a challenging concept for children to grasp.

### What to do

- Share a simple activity book, experience book or child's reading book.
- Using the story/pictures, ask questions relating to 'when' particular things happen:
  - ★ 'When do we have a bath?'
  - ★ 'When do we put up an umbrella?'
  - ★ 'When do we need a plaster?'
  - ★ 'When do we put the lights on?'
  - ★ 'When does a cat miaow?'
- Encourage appropriate responses. Use sentence completion if the child finds the activity difficult, e.g.
  - ★ Adult: 'When do we put the lights on?'
  - ★ Child: No response.
  - ★ Adult: 'We put the lights on when it's ...' (pause).
  - ★ Child: 'Night time.'



### Step up

- Encourage the child to use a fuller sentence to respond to 'when' questions.
- Use an increasing range of question words (e.g. 'what', 'where', 'why', 'when').
- Draw up a timetable of the child's day with pictures for activities that happen throughout the day. Ask: 'When's lunchtime/playtime/assembly?', etc. Encourage responses such as 'after dinner', 'in the morning', 'before'.
- Using 'when' at the appropriate time throughout the day makes it more meaningful.

## Step down

- Use signs/gestures, photos/symbols to represent the days of the week or key daily events (e.g. lunchtime).
- Offer choices: 'Do we put the lights on when it's night time or daytime?'
- Use pictures to guide the child to the correct answer (e.g. picture of children going to bed or a night scene out of the window).
- Make a sentence to finish (e.g. 'We go to bed when it's ...?').

