



## Speech and Language Therapy

### Concepts

**What is a concept:** a concept is an idea that allows us to describe things and talk about what we have done or going to do. Children learn concepts with distinctive attributes first i.e. thing that can be seen, felt or drawn. These might include Size or texture.

To develop the child's understanding of the concepts e.g. shapes, he/she will need to experience the concepts in a range of different situations e.g. dirty boots, dirty hands, dirty car, as well as being taught the concepts in more structured activities.

A concept should be targeted one at a time e.g. small then big; cold then hot; dirty then clean. It is important not to teach opposites at the same time e.g. don't teach big and small together as something may be medium size. Instead teach 'big' and 'not big'.

It is important to use a multi-sensory approach:

For example if you are teaching the concept 'next to':

- Get the child to complete the activity e.g. put themselves next to a variety of objects. This movement e.g. in a PE lesson gives a Kinaesthetic experience.
- Get the child to put an object completing the action e.g. put a next 'next to' a variety of objects. This tactile input reinforces the learning.
- Use simple language to talk about the concept. " the teddy is next to the chair".
- Use pictures/ gesture for visual reinforcement.
- Talk about past/ future experiences which uses the concept.

Begin with the concrete activity, progress to the pictorial task and then the abstract.

Choose teaching materials carefully (e.g. when teaching the concept 'small' make sure the objects are not all hard or he might think that 'small' = 'hard').

Do not teach opposites together until they have been acquired separately e.g. don't teach big and small together. Use 'big' and 'not big'.

Repeat activities frequently (i.e. little & often).

Ensure generalisation so that once the concept has been understood begin to widen the experience by introducing the concept in other situations.



Teach through matching and sorting activities.

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The table below is based on Ann Locke's 'Living Language' programme. Locke states that the different word lists should not be adhered to rigidly but that the words listed in the first column should be learnt at one level before proceeding to the next.

	<b>Basic concepts</b>		→	<b>Difficult concepts</b>
<b>SIZE</b>	Big, little, heavy	Empty, fat, full, long, small	Biggest, large, light, short, tall, thin, bigger, fattest, heaviest, longest, smallest	Deep, narrow, shallow, thick, wide, fatter, heavier, longer, smaller, largest, lightest, shortest, tallest, thinnest
<b>SPACE</b>	In, on, under, off, out, up	In front, behind, near, next to, by, outside, top, over, through	Beside, backwards, back, between, far, front, high, low, middle, side, together, towards,	above, across, against, apart, below, facing, sideways, upright
<b>TEXTURE</b>	Hard, soft	Cold, dry, wet, hot	Furry, rough, smooth, warm	
<b>SOUND</b>	Noisy, quiet/ly	Loud/ly, soft/ly		High, low
<b>SHAPE</b>	Dot, spot, line, round	Circle, flat, square	Cross, triangle	Corner, curved, diamond, oval, rectangle, shape, slant/ slope, straight
<b>MOVEMENT</b>	Fast, slow/ly	Moving, quick/ly, still		Jerky, smooth
<b>QUANTITY</b>	A bit, all, lots, some, more	Another, any, many, no more, as much as	About, both, every, few, half, most, nearly, only, other	Each, enough, equal, fewest, less, much, none, part, plenty, several, unequal, whole.
<b>TIME</b>	Again, now	After, soon, today	Always, before, later, yesterday	Early, late, never, once, sometimes, tomorrow, twice
<b>PERSONAL QUALITIES</b>	Good, happy, naughty, sad	Bad, hungry, nice, pretty, silly	Cross, frightened, kind, thirsty	Clever, excited, pleased, unkind.



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