

ENCOURAGING Early Language Skills IN CHILDCARE SETTINGS

ENCOURAGING Turn-Taking IN CHILDCARE SETTINGS

SNACK TIME AND BAKING ACTIVITIES

- Involve the child in cooking/food preparation where possible. Show them a simple action (e.g., stirring cake mixture, or putting salad in the salad spinner), then encourage them to have a turn. Continue taking turns in this way while you prepare the meal/snack.
- Model how you share snacks with other children. You can give each child one at once until all the snacks are equally distributed. Encourage the child to help with this.
- Take turns putting cutlery into the dishwasher or the kitchen sink.

CLEANUP TIME

- Take turns putting toys back into their original places, e.g., you put a toy on a shelf, or a block in the box, and wait for the child to do it too. Continue taking turns in this way until it's all put away.

FREE PLAY - WATERPLAY AREA

Try taking turns while playing with the water, for example:

- scooping and pouring water with cups.
- splashing the water.
- pushing things underwater and watching them float back to the top.
- scooping bubbles onto your hands and blowing them back into the water.

FREE PLAY

- Play peek-a-boo or clapping games.
- Build towers with blocks.
- Roll a car or ball back and forth.
- Take turns lifting the flaps when reading lift-the-flap books.

OUTSIDE

- Take turns jumping in puddles.
- Take turns kicking or throwing a ball back and forth.
- Take turns chasing each other.
- Take turns blowing bubbles.



Top Tips

Model "my turn", "your turn" while doing the activity.

- If they don't take a turn, you can repeat the action again & encourage them to have another turn.
- If you copy their actions, they may repeat the action in the same way, turning it into a natural turn-taking game.

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ENCOURAGING Imitation Skills IN CHILDCARE SETTINGS

SNACK TIME AND MEAL TIMES

- Rub your stomach and say "mmm" when cooking or eating.
- Do a gesture for drinking/eating.
- Say "brn" and shake your arms if foods are cold.
- Model blowing on foods to cool them down if they are hot.
- Knock on doors and drawers and say "knock knock" before opening them.

NAP TIME

- Put your finger on your lips and model "shh" when the child gets into bed.

STORYTIME

- Knock on flaps in books and say "knock knock" before lifting them.
- Copy actions from the book, e.g., tickling the character in the book, clapping hands, etc.
- Play peek-a-boo or clapping games.
- Sing nursery rhymes with actions.

OUTSIDE

- Kick and blow dandelions.
- Play simple copying games – jump, stomp, wave.
- Do a sniffing action when smelling flowers, then say "smell".
- Clap and say "yay" when the child does something good, e.g., if they win a running race or catch a ball.



Top Tips

If a child isn't interested in copying their actions and sounds. Keep this fun and playful. Once they have shown interest in this and started intentionally doing an action or sound for you to copy, you can encourage them to do an action/sound for them to copy.

- Remember that acting comes before imitating sounds.
- You can encourage the child to copy your actions by saying "you try" or "you do it". But keep this fun and playful, avoid putting too much pressure on the child to copy you.
- If they don't copy, you can repeat the action again, or just continue with the activity.
- Familiar actions and actions with objects are easier to copy than new ones and things they can't see. E.g., clapping their hands is easier than patting their head.

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US
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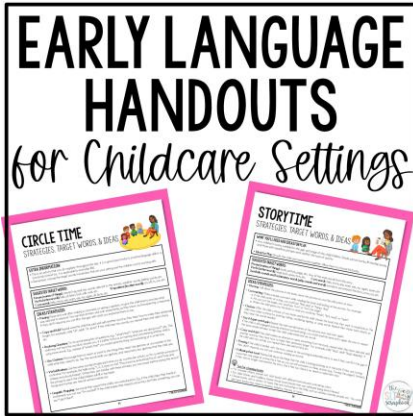
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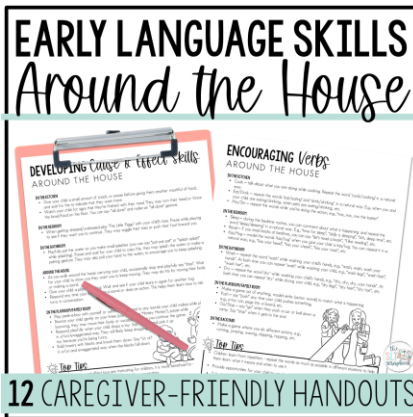


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These [Early Language Handouts for Childcare Settings](#) outline how to use general language facilitation strategies in a range of activities applicable to childcare settings. They are written in caregiver-friendly terms, so they can be easily understood by childcare providers.



Support carryover of early language and communication skills at home with these print-and-go early language handouts. [This Early Intervention resource](#) includes 12 caregiver-friendly handouts with ideas and tips for encouraging different early speech, language, and communication skills around the house.



These bright and colorful, rainbow-themed [Early Language Posters](#) are a must-have addition to any Speech and Language Therapist's toolkit!

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This resource contains information sheets, speech and language milestones, early language strategy posters, and bulletin board letters so you can make an eye-catching and informative early language display, with ease!

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This resource includes 12 caregiver-friendly handouts with ideas and tips for encouraging different early speech, language, and communication skills in the childcare setting (e.g., daycare/preschool/Early Childhood classroom).

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INFORMATION FOR THERAPISTS

- These handouts include simple, practical ideas for encouraging various early speech, language, and communication skills in the childcare setting. They are designed for use with toddlers and preschoolers with delayed speech, language, and communication skills. All of the handouts are written in caregiver-friendly terms, suitable for sharing with childcare providers after visits, or using for your own reference.
- The strategies included in this resource are evidence-based General Language Stimulation strategies. General language stimulation involves making changes to the physical and linguistic environments, in order to increase the opportunities for the child to hear developmentally appropriate language.

IDEAS FOR USE

- Share the handouts with parents/caregivers or childcare providers after therapy visits or meetings to support the development and carryover of skills in the childcare setting.
- Put the handouts on a bulletin board as a “skill of the month”.
- Put these handouts in a binder and use them for your own reference.

RESEARCH

Early Intervention Sessions in Childcare Settings

Guidelines for best practice recommend that interventions for children happen within their natural, everyday environments, embedding support into the child's regular schedule alongside people and settings they are familiar with (*see: ASHA (USA) and RCSLT (UK) guidance, Part C IDEA (USA), DEC (USA), and McWilliam, 2010, amongst others*).

So if sessions are to be delivered in a daycare or preschool setting (rather than home environment), this approach means we should, where possible and appropriate, avoid removing children from their normal classroom environment or segregating them for specialized sessions. Instead, our focus should be on empowering the caregivers/setting staff, enabling them to support the child's development in play and routines within the setting.

Typically, Early Intervention therapists focus on collaborating with caregivers to encourage carryover into the home environment between sessions. However, since young children also spend time in childcare settings, it is good practice to collaborate and coach setting staff to use strategies and support a child's development too.

However, research has found that there can be some barriers to effectively delivering Early Intervention sessions in childcare settings. Issues such as poor communication between the therapist and the childcare provider, lack of carryover, unclear strategies, and lack of consistency all had an impact on the intervention provided (Weglarz-Ward et al, 2019).

But, research has also found that providing suggestions that are related to the child's specific routine (the activities and play opportunities available in the setting) and choosing strategies that can be applied to all children in the setting are more likely to be implemented, than those which are unclear or require one-to-one support (Weglarz-Ward et al, 2019).

How does this apply to these handouts?

These handouts:

- ✓ provide practical suggestions for supporting early speech, language, and communication skills during play and routines in a childcare setting
- ✓ include suggested activities that are common occurrences in childcare settings. They are accessible to a wide variety of children and do not require specialist intervention or one-to-one support
- ✓ are written in caregiver-friendly terms, so they can be easily understood by others.

These handouts aim to:

- ✓ improve communication between therapists and childcare providers
- ✓ support the development of early language skills in the childcare setting
- ✓ support the carryover of skills and strategies between visits.

REFERENCES:

- McWilliam, R.A. (2010) *'Routines-Based Early Intervention: Supporting Young Children and Their Families'* Paul H Brookes Publishing Co., Baltimore, MD
- Weglarz-Ward, J. M., Santos, R. M., & Hayslip, L. A. (2019). 'What early intervention looks like in child care settings: Stories from providers'. *Journal of Early Intervention*.
The Informed SLP (2022) – Research review: "Does anyone know how EI at daycare is supposed to work?". Accessed online November 2023

USING Language Strategies IN CHILDCARE SETTINGS

COMMENTING:

Talk about what you/the child are doing, and what things feel/taste/smell like, using simple words and phrases. E.g., “I’m stirring the batter”, “there’s lots of flour”, “scoop it out”, etc.

VERBAL ROUTINES:

Verbal routines are words and phrases that become predictable because you say them the same way every time you do the same activity. E.g., “1, 2, 3”, “ready, set, go”, “morning, rise and shine!”. Pause before saying the end of the phrase to give the child an opportunity to say the word.

CHOICES:

Offering choices gives the child a reason and opportunity to interact and communicate to get their needs and wants met. Offer them a choice of two things, make the choices visual where possible. They may make their choices by pointing, reaching, vocalizing, signing, or using words. You can then repeat their choice back to them.

FOLLOW THEIR LEAD

Talk about, and play with, the things the child is playing with and/or looking at. Respond to the child’s interactions and interests. Model/copy the child’s actions, words, or sounds. This can support the child’s attention and interaction skills, as well as their language skills.

REDUCE QUESTIONS

As adults, we use questions to see what children know, but this is difficult for children who are learning to talk. It is better to add a comment to explain what is happening, so they have the opportunity to hear and learn new words.

PAUSING

Pause in anticipation to give the child time to listen, understand what was asked, and to respond. Show them you are waiting by looking expectantly for a reply. If they don’t respond, you can say the words you wanted them to say.



- You don’t have to use every strategy in every activity throughout the day. Instead, choose one or two strategies to focus on in a couple of routines/activities. This will feel less overwhelming for you and the child. When you feel more confident/the strategies feel more natural for you to use, you can start using other strategies in other routines/activities.
- Remember that learning language doesn’t happen overnight. Be positive about the progress that the child is making and the strategies you are using. Use the strategies consistently with the child.

DEVELOPING Cause & Effect Skills IN CHILDCARE SETTINGS

SNACK TIME

- Give the child a small amount of snack, or pause before giving them another mouthful of food, and wait for them to indicate that they want more.
- Watch the child for signs that they're finished with their meal. They may turn their head or push the bowl/food onto the floor. You can say "all done" and make an "all done" gesture.

AROUND THE SETTING

- As you walk around the setting with the child, occasionally stop and playfully say "stop". Wait for the child to show you they want you to keep moving. They may do this by moving their body, looking at you, saying a word, or making a sound.
- Respond any time the child makes a sound or does an action. This helps them learn how to take turns in conversation.
- Draw their attention to buttons that turn things on and off, e.g., lights, music, etc.

FREE PLAY

- Play peek-a-boo with your hands or with toys. Respond to any sounds the child makes while playing.
- Bounce the child gently on your knee (you could sing 'Horsey Horsey'), pause while bouncing; they may move their body or vocalize to make you continue the game.
- Respond playfully when the child drops a toy. Say "uh oh" and pick it up in a fun/exaggerated way. They will likely keep dropping the toy because you're being funny.
- Build towers with blocks and knock them down. Say "uh oh" in a fun and exaggerated way when the blocks fall down.

FREE PLAY - WATER PLAY AREA

- Playfully pat the water so you make small splashes (you can say "pat pat pat" or "splash splash" while splashing). Pause and wait for the child to copy this; they may splash the water or make a patting gesture. They may also pull your hand to the water, to encourage you to keep splashing.



Top Tips

- Although cause-and-effect toys are motivating for children, it is more beneficial for you to be the toy because it encourages the social aspect of communication.
- Pause and wait expectantly for the child to take a turn. Respond to the body movements or sounds the child makes by repeating the action or saying a word, e.g., "more tickles".

DEVELOPING Attention & Listening

IN CHILDCARE SETTINGS

Draw the child's attention to things you can see and hear, for example...

AROUND THE SETTING

- Telephones ringing
- Doorbell/knocking on the door
- Doors opening/closing

IN THE BATHROOM

- The sound of the faucet when you turn it on/off
- Extractor fan
- The toilet flushing

OUTSIDE

- The sound of traffic
- Birds singing
- Dogs barking
- Lawn mower
- Children playing or people talking nearby
- Play a game – go/stop listening game: stand a distance from the child, tell them to run/walk when you say 'go' and stop when you say 'stop'. Say go/stop at random, until they get to you.

LISTENING GAMES TO TRY

- Play with different toys – point out the different sounds they make, noisy vs quiet, long vs short, etc.
- Play a game – hide a musical toy in the room, and encourage the child to find it.
- Play a game – musical statues: play some music and dance, stand still when the music is paused.
- Explore loud vs quiet sounds by banging wooden spoons on pots and pans.

STORYTIME

- While reading the story, give the child a word to listen for. They can do an action or make a sound to match when they hear it.



Top Tips

- Pause and hold your hand by your ear to show the child you can hear something. Tell them what you can hear.
- Turn off distractions like the television/music/tablets, etc. when they're not being used.

ENCOURAGING Turn-Taking

IN CHILDCARE SETTINGS

SNACK TIME AND BAKING ACTIVITIES

- Involve the child in cooking/food preparation where possible. Show them a simple action (e.g., stirring cake mixture, or putting salad in the salad spinner), then encourage them to have a turn. Continue taking turns in this way while you prepare the meal/snack.
- Model how you share snacks with other children. You can give each child one at once until all the snacks are equally distributed. Encourage the child to help with this.
- Take turns putting cutlery into the dishwasher or the kitchen sink.

CLEAN UP TIME

- Take turns putting toys back into their original places, e.g., you put a toy on a shelf, or a block in the box, and wait for the child to do it too. Continue taking turns in this way until it is all put away.

FREE PLAY - WATER PLAY AREA

Try taking turns while playing with the water, for example:

- scooping and pouring water with cups.
- splashing the water.
- pushing things underwater and watching them float back to the top.
- scooping bubbles onto your hands and blowing them back into the water.

FREE PLAY

- Play peek-a-boo or clapping games.
- Build towers with blocks.
- Roll a car or ball back and forth.
- Take turns lifting the flaps when reading lift-the-flap books.

OUTSIDE

- Take turns jumping in puddles.
- Take turns kicking or throwing a ball back and forth.
- Take turns chasing each other.
- Take turns blowing bubbles.



Top Tips

- Model “my turn”, “your turn” while doing the activity.
- If they don’t take a turn, you can repeat the action again & encourage them to have another turn.
- Anything can become a turn-taking activity. If you copy their actions, they may repeat the action again; you can keep copying them in this way, turning it into a natural turn-taking game.

ENCOURAGING Gestures

IN CHILDCARE SETTINGS

SNACK TIME AND MEAL TIMES

- Rub your stomach and say “mmm” while eating.
- Do a gesture for drinking/eating.
- Model how to reach “up” before you lift them out of their high chair.

NAP TIME

- Put your finger on your lips to model “shh”.
- Put your hands together, head on hands for ‘sleeping’.

ARRIVAL TIME/HOME TIME

- Wave hello/goodbye.
- Model how to reach “up” before you pick them up.
- Point to their belongings – point to the hook when you hang their coat and bag up when they arrive, and point to their things when you take them off the hook at the end of the day.

STORYTIME

- Wave hello to pictures in books.
- Point to pictures in the books.
- Do actions to match the story, e.g., waft your hand in front of your nose to show ‘stinky’ if it matches the story.

AROUND THE SETTING

- Waving – wave to people you see as you move around the setting, wave “hi” to pictures in books and toys when you’re playing. Wave when the child sees themselves in mirrors and reflections.
- Pointing – model pointing at things you can see and hear.
- Model clapping when someone has done something good.

OUTSIDE

- Pointing – point to things you can see and hear.
- Lift your hand to your ear when you hear something.
- Do a sniffing action when smelling flowers.
- Wave to birds or airplanes.



Top Tips

- Respond to the child’s gestures; imitate their gesture, and add a word that matches the meaning.
- Make sure the child can see you when you are using gestures.
- Be sure to speak and make the gesture at the same time.

ENCOURAGING Imitation Skills

IN CHILDCARE SETTINGS

SNACK TIME AND MEAL TIMES

- Rub your stomach and say “mmm” when cooking or eating.
- Do a gesture for drinking/eating.
- Say “brrr” and shake your arms if foods are cold.
- Model blowing on foods to cool them down if they are hot.
- Knock on doors and drawers and say “knock knock” before opening them.

NAP TIME

- Put your finger on your lips and model “shh” when the child gets into bed.

STORYTIME

- Knock on flaps in books and say “knock knock” before lifting them.
- Copy actions from the book, e.g., tickling the character in the book, clapping hands, etc.
- Play peek-a-boo or clapping games.
- Sing nursery rhymes with actions.

OUTSIDE

- Kick and blow dandelions.
- Play simple copying games – jump, stomp, wave, etc.
- Do a sniffing action when smelling flowers, then say “ahh”.
- Clap and say “yay” when the child does something good, e.g., if they win a running race or catch a ball.



Top Tips

- If a child isn't imitating, start by copying their actions and sounds. Keep this fun and playful. Once they have shown an interest in this and started intentionally doing an action or sound for you to copy, you can begin doing an action/sound for them to copy.
- Remember, imitating actions comes before imitating sounds.
- You can encourage the child to copy your actions by saying “you try” or “you do it”. But keep this fun and playful; avoid putting too much pressure on the child to copy you.
- If they don't copy, you can repeat the action again, or just continue with the activity.
- Familiar actions and actions with objects are easier to copy than new ones and things they can't see. E.g., clapping their hands is easier than patting their head.

ENCOURAGING Symbolic Sounds

IN CHILDCARE SETTINGS

SNACK TIME AND MEAL TIMES

- Rub your stomach and say “mmm” or “yum” while eating.
- Make a “slurping” sound when drinking. Say “ah” when you’ve swallowed the drink.
- Say “brr” when foods and drinks are cold.
- Say “ouch” when foods and drinks are hot.
- Knock on doors and drawers and say “knock knock” before opening.

NAP TIME

- Model “shh” when the child gets into bed.
- Model a snoring sound.

DIAPER CHANGE/TOILET TIME

- Model “pee-yoo” to show something is stinky.
- Model “splash” when the child is splashing in the water.
- Model “brr” if the water is cold, say “ouch” if it is too hot.

AROUND THE SETTING

- Say “ahh” (relaxing sound) when you sit down.
- If you have photos around the room, wave and say “hi” to the people in the photos.

STORYTIME

- Knock on flaps in books and say “knock knock” before lifting them.
- Model appropriate sounds to match the pictures, e.g., animal or vehicle sounds.

FREE PLAY

- Model vehicle sounds, animal sounds, etc., while playing with toys.
- Model eating and drinking sounds when playing with toy food, etc.

OUTSIDE

- Copy the sounds of things you hear in the backyard, e.g., birds, cars, etc.
- Do a sniffing action when smelling flowers, then say “ahh”.
- Clap and say “yay” when the child does something good, e.g., if they win a running race or catch a ball.



Top Tips

- Respond to the sounds the child makes, copy these, then add a relevant word.
- Make sure the child can see you when you are making the sounds.
- Use symbolic sounds (vehicle sounds, animal sounds, etc.) & exclamatory words (go, wow, yay, etc.).



ENCOURAGING Core Words

IN CHILDCARE SETTINGS

SNACK TIME/MEAL TIMES/COOKING ACTIVITIES

- Up – model “up” before you lift them to put them in/take them out of their high chair.
- In – model “in” each time you put something in something else, e.g., in the oven, in the fridge, etc. Model “in” when you put the child in their high chair.
- Help – give them a snack, but don’t open it. E.g., give them a yogurt with the lid on, wait for the child to show they need help, then model “help”.
- More – give them a small amount of snack, and wait for them to request “more”; you can model the word and then give them a little more, e.g., give them a few raisins, then wait.

AROUND THE SETTING

- Up – model “up” when they lift their arms up to be picked up, when you pick them up, and when you go up the stairs.
- Down – model “down” when you put the child down, and when you go down the stairs.
- On/Off – model “on” and “off” each time you turn lights or faucets on/off.
- Open – model “open” each time you open any doors and drawers.
- Hi/Bye – say hi/bye to people you see as you move around the setting, say “hi” to pictures in books and toys when you’re playing. Say hi/bye when the child sees themselves in mirrors and reflections.
- Yes/No – model “yes” and “no” when appropriate, especially when they’re nodding or shaking their head.

IN THE BATHROOM

- Help – wait before turning the faucet on, or drying their hands. Give the child an opportunity to request help, then model “help”.
- All done – say “all done” when their hands are clean/dry.

CLEAN UP TIME

- Bye – say “bye” to toys when you’re putting them away.
- Help/Want – put desirable items in view but out of reach, i.e., put toys on a high shelf. Encourage the child to point to these things to request them, then model “help” or “want”.



Top Tips

- Children learn from repetition - repeat the words as much as possible in different situations to help them learn what it means and when to use it.
- Provide opportunities for the child to use these words. If they don’t say the word, you model it.

ENCOURAGING First Words

IN CHILDCARE SETTINGS

SNACK TIME AND MEAL TIMES

- Name foods and drinks, e.g., milk, cookie, banana. Focus initially on the things they like most.
- Offer choices at snack time and mealtimes (where appropriate), e.g., “Do you want a cookie or crackers?”. This gives the child an opportunity to communicate and make a choice.
- More – give the child a small amount of a snack, and wait for them to request more. You can model “more” when you give them more, e.g., give them a few raisins, then wait.
- (All) Gone – model “gone” or “all gone” when foods and drinks are finished.

AROUND THE SETTING

- Up – model “up” when they lift their arms up to be picked up, and when you go up the stairs.
- Down – model “down” when you put the child down, and when you go down the stairs.
- On/Off – model “on” and “off” each time you turn lights on/off.
- Hi/Bye – say hi/bye to people you see as you move around the setting, say “hi” to pictures in books and toys when you’re playing. Say hi/bye when the child sees themselves in mirrors and reflections.
- Yes/No – model “yes” and “no” when appropriate, especially when they’re nodding or shaking their head.

FREE PLAY

- Name toys that the child is playing with. Focus initially on the toys/games they like best as they will be motivating for the child.
- Repeat the words often during play, in a natural way. E.g., if they’re playing with toy cars, you can say “push the car”, “fast car”, “go car, go!”, etc.

OUTSIDE

- Name and talk about things the child is playing with/doing in the outside space. E.g., if the child is playing with a ball, you can say “ball”, “Jack’s ball”, “big ball”, “kick the ball”, etc.
- Name body parts and clothing as you help them get dressed to go outside. E.g., “boots”, “on your feet”, “coat on”, “arm in”, etc.



Top Tips

- Children learn from repetition – repeat the words as much as possible in different situations to help them learn what it means and when to use it.
- Provide opportunities for the child to use these words. If they don’t say the word, you model it.
- First words may sound different to how an adult says them. E.g., they may say “dod” instead of “dog”. This is OK, you can repeat the word back to them, so they hear how it should sound.

ENCOURAGING Verbs

IN CHILDCARE SETTINGS

COOKING ACTIVITIES

- Cook/Bake – talk about what you are doing while cooking/baking. Repeat the words ‘cook/cooking’ or ‘bake/baking’ in a natural way.
- Mix/Stir – repeat the words while you’re doing the action, e.g., “mix, mix, mix the batter”.

SNACK TIME/MEAL TIMES

- Eat/Drink – repeat the words ‘eat/eating’ and ‘drink/drinking’ in a natural way.
- Cut – model “cut” when you cut up the child’s food, e.g., “cut, cut, cut the fruit”.

IN THE BATHROOM - WASHING HANDS

- Wash – repeat the word ‘wash’ while washing the child’s hands, e.g., “wash, wash, wash your hands”.
- Dry – repeat the word ‘dry’ while drying the child’s hands, e.g., “dry, dry, dry, your hands”.

FREE PLAY

- Make a game out of anything, model verbs (action words) to match what is happening.
- Push – say “push” any time the child pushes something, e.g., a toy car, pegs into a board, etc.
- Go/Stop – say “go” when they push a car or ball down a ramp. Say “stop” when it gets to the end.
- Scoop/Pour – model “scoop” and “pour” when the child is scooping and pouring thing, e.g., during water play or sensory play.

OUTSIDE

- Make a game where you do different actions, e.g., running, jumping, waving, clapping, hopping, etc.

STORYTIME

- Draw the child’s attention to the pictures, name the actions the characters are doing. E.g., jumping, walking, eating, etc. Model the action and encourage the child to copy this.



- Children learn from repetition - repeat the words as much as possible in different situations to help them learn what it means and when to use it.
- Provide opportunities for the child to use these words. If they don’t say the word, you model it.
- Talk about what you and/or the child are doing, while you are doing it. The words will hold more meaning for the child. E.g., say “push” when they push a toy car.



ENCOURAGING Concepts

IN CHILDCARE SETTINGS

COOKING ACTIVITIES

- Cold – let the child touch things that come out of the fridge/freezer and model the word “cold”.
- Hot – show the child the oven is hot when you’re using it (but don’t let them get too close).
- In/Out – model “in/out” when you put things in/take them out, e.g., in/out of the oven or fridge.
- Empty/Full – show the child when containers are empty/full.

AROUND THE SETTING

- Up – model “up” when you go up the stairs, e.g., “up, up, up the stairs”.
- Down – model “down” when you go down the stairs, e.g., “down, down, down the stairs”.
- On/Off – model “on” and “off” each time you turn lights and faucets on/off.
- Feelings – talk about how you are feeling, and name the emotions the child is showing. E.g., if they are laughing and visibly happy, you can say “happy, you feel happy”.

FREE PLAY - WATER PLAY

- Hot/Cold – let the child play with hot (warm) and cold water. Talk about it while playing.
- Wet/Dry – talk about things being wet/dry, you can say “wet hands” and show them your wet hands. Do the same when drying them, e.g., “dry hands”.
- Clean/Dirty – give them toys to wash in the water, talk about things being clean and dirty as they wash the toys. E.g., “dirty cup”, “clean cup!”, etc.
- Empty/Full – scoop water into a cup and show them that it is full, model “full”, “full cup”, or “full of water”. Then pour the water out and show them it is empty. Model “empty the cup”, “all empty”.

FREE PLAY

- Big/Small – talk about the different sizes of toys, e.g., big vs small cars, big teddy bear, small teddy bear, etc. Blow bubbles with the child. Draw their attention to the different sizes of bubbles.
- Fast/Slow – talk about the speed of the toy cars while playing.
- Noisy/Quiet – play with different instruments and the sounds they make. You can use things from around the setting as instruments, e.g., bang wooden spoons on pots and pans. Talk about sounds being noisy vs quiet.



Top Tips

- Children learn from repetition - repeat the words as much as possible in different situations to help them learn what it means and when to use it.
- Enjoy the activities with the child; children learn best when they are having fun. The child will stay engaged for longer if you look like you are having fun too.

ENCOURAGING Prepositions

IN CHILDCARE SETTINGS

FREE PLAY - HOME CORNER

- In/On/Under – say where you're putting things in the home corner e.g., IN the fridge, ON the shelf, UNDER the table, etc.
- In/Out – model in/out when taking things out/putting things in, e.g., in/out the fridge, oven, or drawers.
- On/Off – model on/off when putting things on or taking them off, e.g., on/off the stove, bed, or a shelf.

OUTSIDE

- On/Off – model on/off when putting coats, hats, gloves, and boots on/taking them off.
- Mixed prepositions – talk about what you can see in the outside space and where things are. Model words like in/out, on/off, in/on/under, etc. as appropriate.

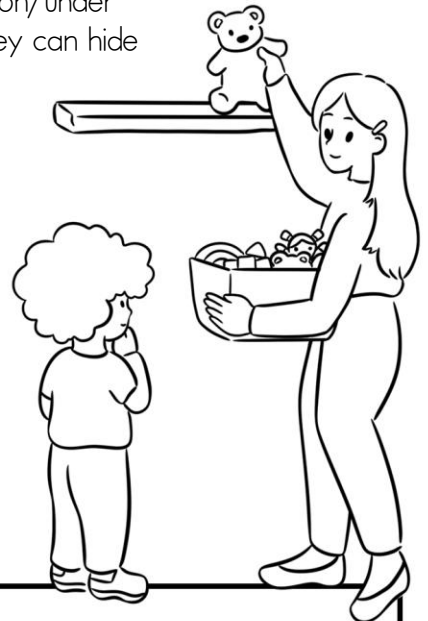
AROUND THE SETTING

- In/Out – model in/out when taking things out/putting things in, e.g., in/out of drawers, etc.
- On/Off – model on/off when putting things on or taking them off, e.g., on/off a shelf, etc. Model on/off when getting on/off the couch, and when taking books or toys off (or putting them on) the shelf.
- In/Out – model in/out when putting things in/taking things out of drawers, boxes, baskets, etc.
- In/On/Under – talk about where things are in the room.

Make it a game – hide a toy somewhere in the room, put them in/on/under something, then encourage the child to say where they found it. They can hide a toy and you can say where you found it.

STORYTIME

- Mixed prepositions – look at the pictures in books. Talk about what you can see and where things are. Model words like in/out, on/off, in/on/under, etc. as appropriate.
- Talk about where you're sitting, e.g., "ON the carpet".



Top Tips

- Point to draw the child's attention to where things are.
- Comment on where things are and what you're doing. This helps them hear how to use prepositions in phrases.