

Language development: learning about opposites

When parents start teaching concepts to their children, they often start with “numbers”, “colours”, and “letters”.

Other concepts like “opposites” are also important and, in fact, can be easier to learn because they relate directly to something children experience.

Try teaching “opposites” using everyday activities. It is usually helpful to emphasise the key word and provide lots of repetition. Sometimes it is useful to incorporate Key Word Signing too.



Hot and Cold

Ideas: drinks, facewashers (flannels), bath water, washing hands, heaters, fridge

Big and Little

Ideas: toys such as big and little teddy, food, clothes, shoes

Loud and Quiet

Ideas: music, TV, talking, singing, banging, clapping

Clean and Dirty

Ideas: clothes, hands, shoes, face

Wet and Dry

Ideas: bath time, water play, washing and drying the dishes, bathing dolly

Open and Shut

Ideas: door, box, fridge, cupboard, mouth, hands, singing “open, shut them”

Full and Empty/All Gone

Ideas: food and drink, sand or rice play

Fast and Slow

Ideas: toy cars, walking/running, clapping, pretend to be a train

Happy and Sad

Ideas: labelling these emotions as they happen, books, songs

Same and Different

Ideas: pairs of shoes, pairs of socks, blocks, balls, toys.

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