



# Understanding key words

## Single word level

A child who can understand single words can give you an object when you name the item. For example, “Give me the teddy” when there is more than one choice of toy e.g. a teddy and a dolly.



## Two word level

Once a child can understand single words, then they may start to be able to understand two key words in a sentence. If you had a teddy and a dolly and you are washing them with a sponge, a two key word instruction would be “Wash teddy’s nose” or “Wash dolly’s mouth”. The words that are underlined are the words that have to be understood to carry out the instruction. Other activities include:

- Actions such as “Make dolly dance”, “Make teddy wave”.
- Finding items when there is a choice of colour e.g. “Find the red car”, “Find the blue duck” (objects needed– red car, red duck, blue car, blue duck).



## Three word level



Activities that aim to help a child work towards understanding three key word level instructions:

- Tea party: “Give me the apple, orange and biscuit” (objects needed: a range of toy food items).
- Position words: “Put the ball under the table”, “Put the car on the box” (objects needed: ball, car, table, box).

## Four word level

Activities to develop understanding at a four word level:

- Washing activity: “Brush little dolly’s teeth”, “Brush big dolly’s hair”, “Wash little teddy’s feet” (objects needed: big and little teddy, big and little dolly/action figure, a sponge, a hairbrush and a toothbrush).
- Positions and objects: “Put the red cup under the table”, “Put the blue plate on the blanket” (objects needed: red cup, blue cup, red plate, blue plate, blanket and table).

