

Directional/Positional Concepts

Objective

To demonstrate understanding of directional and positional concepts:

²⁻⁰ Close/open	⁴⁻⁰ Up/down	⁵⁻⁰ Center/corner
Front/back	Forward/backward	Right/left
In/out	Away from/toward	⁶⁻⁰ Right/left of others ⁷⁻⁰
³⁻⁰ Behind/in front of	Low/high	
Bottom/top	Above/below	
Over/under		

DOMAIN

Mathematics: Geometry and Spatial Sense

RATIONALE

Learning directional and positional concepts will help a child understand the spatial relationships that exist between her body and other objects. Thinking spatially is important to a young child's development. A child needs to understand directional and positional concepts to accomplish many school tasks including following verbal directions, writing between lines on paper, and placing written work on paper in an organized manner.

RELATED SKILLS

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Sequence

TEACHING SEQUENCE

1. Initially, teach at the Receptive Level

Initially, teach a child directional and positional concepts at the receptive level. This will help the child develop an understanding of abstract concepts before she has to use them verbally. For example, have the child point to an object that is inside a box, or point to a light switch high on the wall, or point to her left arm.

2. Next, teach at the Expressive Level

Once the child can consistently identify an object that is in a specific position or direction, teach concepts at the expressive level. For example, ask the child, "Is Jenny standing in front of or behind the desk?" or "Where is Jenny standing?" Encourage the child to use complete sentences. Model how to ask and respond to questions when talking about directional/positional concepts.

SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES

Activities used to teach directional and positional concepts should follow a logical progression:

1. Teach Terms in Relation to Child's Own Body

Initially, use activities that require a child to move her body. For example, ask the child to raise her arm up high.

2. Teach Terms Using Objects in Relation to Child's Body

Next, use activities that require a child to place an object in a position that relates to her own body. For example, ask the child to hold a beanbag in front of or behind her body.

3. Teach Terms Using Child in Relation to Object

Next, use activities that require a child to assume a position or direction in relation to an object. For example, ask the child to move to the right of the bookcase.

4. Teach Terms Using Objects in Relation to Each Other

After a child understands the concepts in relation to her own body, use activities that require the child to place objects in relation to each other. For example, ask the child to put a pencil inside a box.

5. Teach Terms Using Positions and Directions on a Horizontal Plane

Finally, use activities that require a child to apply the positional and directional concepts on a horizontal plane. For example, ask the child to point to the top of her paper when the paper is lying flat on the table, or ask the child if the ball is above or below the star on a piece of paper.

Recommendations for Effective Teaching

REFER TO THE LIST OF CONCEPTS

Teach the concepts in the order listed at the beginning of this section. Some of the activities lend themselves especially well to specific directional and positional concepts. These concepts are listed at the end of the Teaching Activities. However, take advantage of any opportunities that come up in everyday situations to develop awareness of directional and positional concepts.

USE INTERESTING OBJECTS

A child may be more engaged in learning if you use objects that she finds interesting. For example, if a child is interested in zoo animals, use blocks or rocks and toy zoo animals to help the child create a miniature zoo. Use this zoo to teach specific directional and positional concepts. You might place a tiger cub in front of a rock and a big tiger behind the rock, or you might ask the child to place one monkey at the top of a block and another at the bottom.

USE GESTURES WHEN GIVING INSTRUCTIONS

Use gestures to demonstrate and emphasize the concepts as you give instructions for an activity. For example, when helping a child draw a square, say, “Begin at the top-left corner. Go down, move to the right, and then move up and to the left.” Move your hand in the appropriate direction as you speak. Then, have the child say only the direction words, down, right, up, and left, as she draws the square.

THINK ABOUT THE CHILD’S PERSPECTIVE

Keep the child’s perspective in mind when you teach positional and directional concepts. The position or direction of an object depends on where you are when you view the object. For example, a cup doesn’t have a front or a back. If you ask a child to put a pencil behind a cup, you are asking the child to place the pencil in relation to the cup and in relation to her own body. If the child understands the concept, she will place the pencil on the side of the cup that is farther away from her.

TEACH CONCEPTS AS THEY RELATE TO THE HORIZONTAL PLANE

Teach positional and directional concepts in the horizontal plane as well as in the vertical plane. The following concepts apply to the horizontal plane as well as to the vertical plane:

front/back	over/under
in front of/behind	above/below
up/down	center/corner
top/bottom	right/left of self

Teachers frequently give children directions that include positional or directional terms in reference to a sheet of paper or a book placed in the horizontal plane (on the child’s desk, on a work table, flat on the floor). If the children do not understand how these terms relate to items in the horizontal plane, they cannot follow the directions. Understanding how these terms relate to the horizontal plane can mean the difference between success and failure in many primary classrooms. Therefore, after a child understands the concepts as they apply to the vertical plane (to the body in a standing position), help the child transfer her knowledge to the horizontal plane. Helping the child make this transfer is very important.

HELP THE CHILDREN LEARN RIGHT AND LEFT

Much has been written regarding the difficulties some children have in developing an awareness and understanding of right and left. Use the following suggestions and ideas to help a child overcome these difficulties:

- **One Concept at a Time**
Some children may become confused if you attempt to teach both right and left at the same time. To avoid this confusion, thoroughly explore and teach the concept right prior to introducing or placing any emphasis on left. When you feel that the child has a solid understanding of right, introduce left.
- **Dominant Hand**
The hand that the child consistently uses to hold a crayon, a pencil, or a cup is referred to as the dominant hand. Most children establish a degree of hand dominance by age five. If hand dominance is established, encourage the child to say, “My right (left) hand is the one I write with.”
- **Children Should Not Face Each Other**
Activities used to teach right and left should not require children to stand in a circle. Confusion about right and left may result if the children face each other and do not see a “mirror image.”

- **“Branded” Hand**

If a child has a scar or a distinguishing mark on one hand, help her associate that hand with the concept right or left. (**NOTE:** Be sensitive. A child may be self-conscious about a birthmark or a scar.) If a child does not have a distinguishing mark, tie or place something red (a string or a sticker) on her right hand or wrist. As the child becomes proficient in identifying which hand is her right hand, gradually reduce the size of the string or the sticker.

TALK ABOUT THE PICTURES IN BOOKS

As the children look at and share pictures in books, talk about the pictures and ask questions about the different positions and directions of objects in the pictures. (Remember that left and right are reversed for you if you are holding a book and facing the children.)

TALK TO THE CHILDREN ABOUT THEIR ACTIONS

Children can learn directional and positional concepts from engaging in everyday activities. Talk to the children about their actions. For example, when a child is placing a book on a shelf, say, “Timmy is putting the book on the top shelf.” Also, ask questions such as, “Did Timmy put the book on the top shelf, the middle shelf, or the bottom shelf?”

DISCUSS THE PLACEMENT OF NAMES ON PAPERS

As you show the children where to write their names on their papers, point to and describe where they will write their names. For example, point to the top-right corner of a sheet of paper and say, “I want you to write your name in the top-right corner of the paper.” If necessary, explain and demonstrate each word: top, right, and corner.

TALK ABOUT POSITIONS IN LINE

When the children are lining up, discuss positions of the children in line. Ask questions. For example, say, “Jill is behind Mark. Who is in front of Perry?” When a child seems to understand the different positions, have her tell her position in the line and the positions of others.

PROVIDE THE CHILDREN WITH CHOICES

When possible, let a child state her choice of alternatives. For example, ask, “Do you want the window open or closed?” “Do you want to hold the beanbag in your right hand or your left hand?” “Do you want to sit in the front or in the back?”

TALK ABOUT WHAT THE CHILDREN WILL DO

Use directional and positional concepts when you tell the children what you want them to do. For example, when walking to lunch, say, “Let’s walk on the right side of the stairs.” When going outside, say, “Today we’ll play at the back of the field.”

VERBALIZE WHAT IS HAPPENING AS CHILDREN PERFORM ACTIVITIES

During many activities (cooking, painting, working with clay, cutting with scissors, pasting, working with wood), there are opportunities to use directional and positional terms. If you verbalize these terms as the children participate in activities, the children will understand how the terms apply in many situations. This auditory input will help children develop language skills.

READ WITH YOUR CHILDREN

Here are some books that children will enjoy reading.

Berenstain, Stanley and Janice Berenstain. *Inside, Outside, Upside Down*.
Rosen, Michael. *We’re Going on a Bear Hunt*. Illus. by Helen Oxenbury.
Vail, Rachel. *Over the Moon*. Illus. by Scott Nash.

See the Read-to-Me Books on page 262 for other engaging books.

COMMUNICATE WITH FAMILIES

- **Send Home a Letter** The Letter to Families suggests fun ways for families to reinforce classroom learning at home. It recommends activities to try and books to read with children. (See page 275 for a sample letter for this section.)
- **Send Home the Learning Plan** Give children a copy of the Learning Plan to share with their families. Encourage families to read and talk about the Learning Plan, “I am learning words that tell where things are.” (See page 283.)

Factors That Impact Development

Be alert to factors that might affect development. If you observe some difficulties, refer the family to the appropriate medical professional. Keep daily anecdotal notes on the child and include the child's strengths and weaknesses.

POOR AUDITORY DISCRIMINATION

Some children at the readiness level have not developed adequate auditory discrimination skills. These children may experience confusion because they cannot discriminate words that sound similar. The following are examples of words that may cause confusion:

in/end	top/stop
off/of	front/from
left/lift	

HEARING OR VISUAL PROBLEMS

Observe children for indications of a hearing problem or a visual problem. If a child appears to have a hearing impairment, be sure she can see your face and your gestures. If a child appears to have a visual impairment, use different kinds of physical prompts (tactile and kinesthetic).

DIFFICULTY TRANSFERRING THE SKILL TO A DIFFERENT PLANE

A child with learning difficulties frequently has trouble transferring new learning to different situations. Therefore, a child may have difficulty transferring her understanding of directional and positional concepts from the vertical plane to the horizontal plane.

Teaching Activities

1. Open, Close Them

Materials: None.

Group Size: Individual, small group, or class.

Procedure: Reinforce the concept open/close by doing the finger play “Open, Close Them” with children: Do the following:

- Have children sit in a circle.
- Tell children that you are going to teach them a song called “Open, Close Them.” Sing the song to the children as you demonstrate the actions.

Open, close them. Open, close them.
(open hands and make fists two times)

Give a little clap, clap, clap.
(clap three times)

Open, close them. Open, close them.
(open hands and make fists two times)

Put them on your lap.
(place hands in lap)

Creep them, crawl them. Creep them, crawl them.
Right up to your chin.

(take index and middle fingers on one hand and walk them up other arm and up to your chin)

Open up your little mouth.
(point to mouth and open mouth)

But do not let them in!
(quickly put hands behind back)

- Sing the song again and invite children to join in and do the hand motions with you.

CONCEPTS: Repeat this activity using other directional/positional words: in/out, closed/open, up/down, front/back, behind/in front of.

2. Shake, Shimmy, and Wiggle

Materials: None. Or, you may wish to play a tape or CD so children can move to music.

Group Size: Individual, small group, or class.

Procedure: Use body movements to introduce positional and directional concepts. This will also provide an opportunity to develop kinesthetic, or bodily awareness. Do the following:

- Have children stand so that each child has enough room to move freely and can see each other. Avoid having children stand in a circle if you are teaching right and left.
- Ask children to show you different ways they can move their body parts. Describe the movements as the children perform them. For example, say: “Hugo, show me one way that you can move your leg.” After the child makes the movement, describe it. (“You kicked your leg forward, then backward.”) Then, ask the other children to make the same movement and describe it again.
- Let children take turns showing ways to move a body part. After most of the children know the movements they can make with different body parts, give directions to the whole group.

CONCEPTS: Repeat this activity using other directional/positional words: in/out, front/back, behind/in front of, up/down, low/high, forward/backward, away from/toward, right/left.

3. Hokey Pokey

Materials: None.

Group Size: Small group or class.

Procedure: Do the following:

- Have children stand far enough apart to allow for movement.
- Tell them that you are going to teach them a song called the Hokey Pokey, and they will move their arms, legs, heads, and bodies.
- Sing the song while demonstrating the movements. Repeat the song using “other arm,” “both arms,” “one leg,” “other leg,” “both legs,” and “whole body.”

You put one arm in, you take one arm out,

You put one arm in and you shake it all about.

You do the Hokey Pokey and you turn yourself around,

That's what it's all about!

4. Beanbag Boogie

Materials: Beanbags: one for each child and one for you.

Group Size: Individual, small group, or class.

Procedure: Do the following:

- Give each child a beanbag.
- Have children stand far enough apart to allow for movement.
- Give directions that require the children to use directional and positional concepts in relation to their body parts. Pause after each direction. For example, tell children to:
 - hold the beanbag in front of them with both hands.
 - lift the beanbag above their heads using both hands.
 - hold the beanbag behind their heads using both hands.
 - place the beanbag on their right wrists and hold it in front of them.
 - hold the beanbag on the left side of their bodies.
 - hold the beanbag on the right side of their bodies.
 - hold the beanbag in their right hands and lift it as high above their heads as they can.
 - hold the beanbag as low as possible with their left hands.
 - hold the beanbag above their head with both hands and sit down slowly.
- Begin with simple one-step directions. Give more difficult directions when children are ready.
- If a child does not understand a direction, demonstrate it again, or have the child watch another child perform the direction.

CONCEPTS: Repeat this activity using other directional/positional words: front/back, behind/in front of, up/down, low/high, over/under, above/below, right/left of self.

NOTE: When you demonstrate a direction that requires the children to apply the concept of left and right, turn your back to children to avoid confusion.

5. Move to the Music

Materials:

- Chairs.
- A tape or CD.
- Tape/CD player.

Group Size: Small group or class.

Procedure: Set up a row of chairs, one chair for each child. Space chairs evenly apart. Then do the following:

- Give children directions on how to play. For example, say: “When I start the music, walk around the chairs. When the music stops, find a chair to sit on.”
- Tell children that when the music begins again, they should stand up and walk around the chairs until the music stops.
- Repeat the routine using the directions and positions you want to teach. For example: “When I start the music, walk behind the chairs.” Or: “When I start the music, walk away from the chairs.”

NOTE: Chairs are not removed during this activity. All children can play throughout the activity.

CONCEPTS: Repeat this activity using other directional/positional words: front/back, behind/in front of, over/under, away from/toward, right/left of self.

6. Tunnel Bugs

Materials: A crawling tunnel or a large appliance box such as a refrigerator box.

Location: A level, smooth-surfaced, open area.

Group Size: Individual, small group, or class.

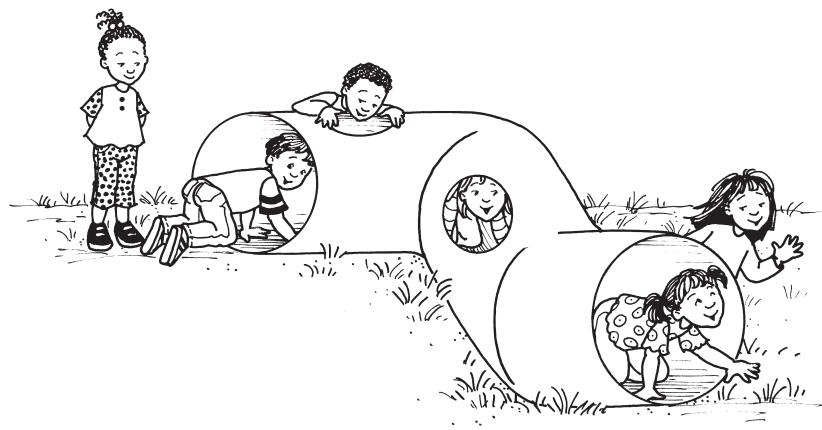
Preparation: If you are using a large appliance box, open the ends of the box so the children can easily climb in and out. Cut a child-size opening or door in the center of the box. Refer to the box as “the playhouse.”

Procedure: Do the following:

- Place the crawling tunnel or playhouse in the center of the open area.
- Tell the children that they are going to play a game and you will be using the words *in* and *out*.
- Have children form a line.
- Ask the first child to crawl into the playhouse and then to crawl out of it.
- Tell children they can decide how they will crawl out of the playhouse. For example, a child might crawl straight through to the opposite end, or come back out the way she went in.
- Give each child a chance to crawl into and out of the structure. Describe the location of the child as she crawls. For example, say, “I can’t see Samantha. She is in the playhouse.” Or “I see Lee backing out of the playhouse.” After the children have mastered *in* and *out*, introduce other concepts you would like them to learn.

EXTENSION: While children play the game, ask them to respond to questions about location. For example, as Samantha crawls through the tunnel, ask: “Samantha, where are you?” Encourage her to respond: “I’m in the playhouse!”

CONCEPTS: Repeat this activity using other directional/positional words: *in/out*, *into/out of*, *front/back*, *behind/in front of*, *forward/backward*, *away from/toward*, *center/corner*.



7. Hula Hoops

Materials:

- A hula hoop for each child.
- A tape or CD.
- Tape/CD player.

Group Size: Individual, small group, or class.

Procedure: Do the following:

- Have children stand far enough apart to allow for movement.
- Give each child a hoop. Have children lay their hoops flat on the ground in front of them.
- Turn on the music. Give children the following verbal directions:
 - Walk into the hoop.
 - Walk out of the hoop.
 - Walk toward the hoop.
 - Walk away from the hoop.
 - Walk forward into the hoop.
 - Walk backward (carefully!) out of the hoop.
 - Walk to the center of the hoop.
- Have children do the above routine again, except jump instead of walk.
- Have children hop on their right foot and repeat the above routine, then do it again on their left foot.

CONCEPTS: Repeat this activity using other directional/positional words: into/out of, front/back, in front of/behind, inside/outside, over/under, forward/backward, toward/away from, right/left of self.



8. Looking High, Looking Low

Materials:

- Large sheet of paper.
- Marker.

Group Size: Individual, small group, or class.

Procedure: Do the following:

- Tell children that they are going to take a walk to look for objects up high and for objects down low.
- Take a walk inside or outside of the school.
- Point out examples of objects as you walk. For example: “The Exit sign is high.” “The plant is low.”
- After you return, list the items the children observed on a large sheet of paper. List the high items up high and the low items down low on the paper.

CONCEPT: Repeat this activity using other directional/positional words: low/high.

9. Where Is the Toy?

Materials:

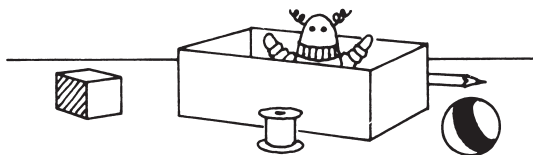
- A container with a lid, such as a shoebox.
- A collection of small toys, such as blocks, spools, small plastic animals.

Group Size: Individual or small group.

Procedure: Do the following:

- Invite children to play with the container and the toys.
- As the children put the toys in different places, talk about where they are placing the toys. Use phrases such as: “in the box,” “under the box,” “on top of the box.”
- Ask children questions that require receptive and then expressive understanding of the concepts. For example, ask: “Can you put the dog behind the box?” or “Where is the dog?”
- Encourage children to respond in complete sentences.

CONCEPTS: Repeat this activity using other directional/positional words: in/out, into/out of, behind/in front of, over/under, center/corner, right/left of self.



10. Toys on the Shelves

Materials:

- A bookcase with a top shelf and a bottom shelf. If a bookcase is not available, tape or glue the sides of two shoeboxes together to form the structure. Also, two steps of a staircase may be used.
- A collection of small toys that can be placed on the shelves: animals, cars, blocks, spools.

Group Size: Individual, small group, or class.

Procedure: Do the following:

- Tell children the location of each shelf—top or bottom—and have the children repeat each location.
- Place the toys on the shelves, and tell children on which shelf you are placing each toy.
- When children understand the shelf positions, have them place a toy on the shelf that you specify. For example, say, “Kareem, put the stuffed turtle on the bottom shelf.” Continue this routine until each child has had a turn.
- Invite children to give instructions using the words top and bottom. Have them take turns telling the others where to place a toy on the shelf.
- Use the bookcase to teach other positional and directional concepts. For example, say: “Put the block in the center of the top shelf.” Or: “Put the car at the back of the bottom shelf.”
- Use the bookcase to teach positional and directional relationships between objects. For example, say: “Put the crayon behind the rabbit.” Or: “Move the car away from the block.”

CONCEPTS: Repeat this activity using other directional/positional words: bottom/top, in/out, into/out of, behind/in front of, low/high, away from/toward, center/corner, right/left of self.

11. Build a Snack!

Materials:

- Thin slices of cheese, apples, and bananas.
- Crackers.
- Napkins.

NOTE: If children have food allergies, replace the snack with other food.

Group Size: Individual, small group, or class.

Procedure: Do the following:

- Show children how to build a cracker sandwich. For example, say: "I'm going to build a cracker sandwich. First, I take a cracker. Next, I put a slice of cheese on the cracker. Then, I put a slice of apple on top of the cheese. Last, I put another cracker on top of the apple. Now I take a bite! Yum!"
- Give each child a napkin, four slices of cheese, four slices of apple, four slices of banana, and eight crackers.
- Let children experiment with the food items. Describe children's actions as they build their snack. For example, say: "Mia put banana in the center of her cracker." Or: "Paulo nibbled the corner of his cheese."

CONCEPTS: Repeat this activity using other directional/positional words: on/off, bottom/top, above/below, center/corner.

12. Float or Sink?

Materials:

- A water table or a large clear bowl filled with water.
- Objects that will float on the water: a tennis ball, a ping pong ball, a pine cone.
- Objects that will sink to the bottom: a small rock, a crayon, a key, a wooden block, a paper clip.
- Towels.

Group Size: Individual, small group, or class.

Procedure: Have children gather around the water table or sit in a circle around a bowl of water. Then do the following:

- Tell children that they will help conduct an experiment to find out which objects float on top of the water.
- Show and name one of the objects. Place the object in the water and ask children whether the object floated on top of the water or sank to the bottom.
- Invite children to predict whether the next object will float or sink before you put it in the water. Repeat the routine with other objects.
- Keep the water table or bowl available with different objects so that children can experiment with the concepts on their own.

CONCEPTS: Repeat this activity using other directional/positional words: in/out, into/out of, bottom/top.

13. Building Blocks

Materials: Identical sets of small blocks: one set for each child.

Group Size: Individual, small group, or class.

Procedure: Have children sit beside you or in a semi-circle so they have the same perspective as you. Then do the following:

- Build a simple structure using a set of blocks. Talk about the placement of each block as you build. For example, say: "I am putting the red block behind the green block. Now I am putting the yellow block on top of the green block."
- Continue building with blocks until you have demonstrated and discussed the concepts that you plan to teach during this session.
- Give each child a set of blocks. Allow children to build freely with the blocks before you begin the structured building activity.
- Comment on the child's placement of the blocks. For example, say: "I see you put a green block on top of the red block."
- Give children specific building instructions. For example, say: "Put a blue block to the right of the yellow block."

CONCEPTS: Repeat this activity using other directional/positional words: behind/in front of, bottom/top, over/under, above/below, center/corner.



14. Going on a Bear Hunt

Materials: None.

Group Size: Individual, small group, or class.

Procedure: Make up a story using positional and directional concepts that you want to teach. Create hand movements to illustrate the concepts. Or use the example below.

- Tell children that you are going to tell them a story, and you want them to act out the story as you tell it.

"We're going on a bear hunt."
(Have the children make walking sounds by patting the floor with the palms of their hands.)

"We're going to start our bear hunt with a walk in the woods. Is everybody ready? Okay! Let's go!"
(Motion to children to follow you and begin walking.)

"I see a giant tree that has fallen. It's too high for us to climb over and too low for us to walk under. I guess we'll have to walk around it. Good! Let's keep walking. Now, we've walked all the way out of the woods."
(Walk around a row of chairs and have children follow you.)

"Now, we're out of the woods. I see some cows in a field and there's a gate in front of us. Let's open the gate and walk through it. Don't forget to close the gate behind you. We don't want the cows to get out of the field."
(Pretend to open and close a gate as you keep walking.)

"Now, we're standing at the bottom of a very high hill. Are you ready to start up the hill? Let's go."
(Pretend to walk up hill)

"Whew! We finally made it! We're at the top of the hill."
"There are a lot of flowers up here. Let's look to the right. Let's look to the left. Let's look below. I see a lake down there. Let's run down the hill to the lake."
(Look to the right, to the left, then below. After, run in place.)

CONCEPTS: Repeat this activity using other directional/positional words: in/out, closed/open, into/out of, front/back, behind/in front of, up/down, bottom/top, low/high, over/under, forward/backward, above/below, away from/toward.

15. I Spy

Materials: Objects in the classroom.

Group Size: Individual, small group, or class.

Procedure: Do the following:

- Tell children that you are going to give them a clue about an object in the classroom. Mention that they should listen closely for the position of the object. After you give the clue, tell children they should guess what you spied. For example, say, "I spy, with my little eye, something on top of the bookshelf."
- If a child guesses an object on top of the bookshelf but not the object you selected, praise her for looking in the correct place.
- If a child guesses an object that is not on top of the bookshelf, tell her the position of the object she chose. For example, say: "That's a good guess, but the flag is above the bookshelf. We are looking for something that is on top of the bookshelf."
- Invite the child who guesses correctly to become the next leader and "spy" the next object.

CONCEPTS: Repeat this activity using other directional/positional words: behind/in front of, high/low, in/out, center/corner, above/below, top/bottom.

16. An Album of Positions

Materials:

- A camera.
- A photo album.
- Labels.

Group Size: The class.

Procedure: Do the following:

- Photograph individual children, the class, and teachers as they demonstrate various directions and positions. For example, one photo may show a group of four children on top of the jungle gym, another photo may be of the entire class in front of the school, and another photo may show a teacher sitting behind her desk.
- Have children dictate a caption for each photo and place the photos in the album. For example, the captions might read: "Juan goes down the slide." "Ben runs toward the sandbox." or "Where is Tareq? He's hiding inside the playhouse!" (This photo could be of a playhouse with the door open, but no child visible.)
- As you take photos, be sure to get a snapshot of everyone.
- Place the album in the book area. Encourage children to flip through the photographs and "read" the captions, retelling what happened in each picture.

CONCEPTS: Repeat this activity using other directional/positional words: up/down, into/out of, front/back, behind/in front of, bottom/top, low/high, over/under, above/below, away from/toward, center/corner, right/left of self.



17. Flannel Board

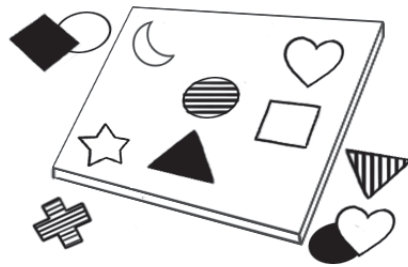
Materials:

- A large flannel board.
- Identical sets of felt cutouts, one set for each child.

Group Size: Individual or small group.

Procedure: Display the flannel board, then do the following:

- First, place felt cutouts in different positions on the flannel board. Talk about the position of each cutout. For example, say: "I am putting this star on the flannel board."
- Next, state the positional relationship of one object to another object. For example: "Now, I am putting this heart below the star." Continue until you have demonstrated and discussed all the relationships that you plan to teach during this session.
- Then, place one cutout at a time on the flannel board. Tell children the position of the cutout in relation to the flannel board. For example, place a felt cutout in the center of the flannel board and say: "This cutout is in the center of the flannel board." Remove the cutout and place another cutout in a corner of the flannel board. Say: "This cutout is in the corner of the flannel board."
- Then, provide each child with a set of felt cutouts. Give the children specific directions. For example, say: "Latoya, place a circle in the middle of the flannel board. Will, place a square to the right of Latoya's circle."
- When children can consistently place the cutouts correctly on the flannel board, lay the flannel board flat on the floor. Have the children sit in a semi-circle around the flat board.
- Repeat the routine, applying the concepts to the flat, horizontal surface.



CONCEPTS: Repeat this activity using other directional/positional words: on/off, up/down, bottom/top, above/below, center/corner, right/left of self.

18. Peg-Boards®

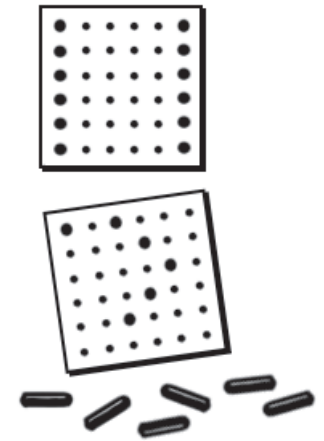
Materials:

- Peg-Boards®: one for each child.
- Identical sets of pegs, one set for each child.

Group Size: Individual, small group, or class.

Procedure: Do the following:

- Place pegs in the board as the children watch. Talk about the placement of each peg. For example, with the Peg-Board flat on a table, place a peg in one of the holes in the center of the Peg-Board. Say: "I am putting this peg in the center."
- Place another peg above the one in the board and say: "I am putting this peg above the other peg."
- Continue this routine until you have demonstrated and named all the concepts that you want children to learn.



CONCEPTS: Repeat this activity using other directional/positional words: in/out, behind/in front of, above/below, center/corner.

19. Board Game

Materials: A board game that uses the following directions: forward, backward, up, down, and center.

Group Size: Small group.

Procedure: Do the following:

- Choose a board to play with children. Explain the purpose and the rules of the game to children.
- As the children play, ask questions such as: “Whose playing piece is in front of the green one?” Make statements such as: “Good, you get to move three spaces forward.”
- Encourage children to use the directional and positional words as they play. For example: “Look, I moved up the ladder three spaces.”

CONCEPTS: Repeat this activity using other directional/positional words: on/off, forward/backward, behind/in front of, center/corner.

20. Left, Right, Left, Right!

Materials:

- Red and blue construction paper.
- Spools or strips of ribbon: red and blue.
- Tape.
- Scissors.

Group Size: Individual, small group, or class.

Preparation: Make tracings of a left foot on blue paper and tracings of a right foot on red paper. Cut out the footprints and place them in a walking pattern on the floor. Tape the backs of the footprints to the floor so that they do not slide.

Procedure: Do the following:

- Tie a blue ribbon onto your left foot and a red ribbon onto your right foot. Do the same for the children.
- Have children follow you as you walk the pattern. Remind them to begin with their right foot on the first red footprint.
- When children take their first two steps, say: “Right,” then “Left.”
- After you and the children have practiced the walk, let children walk the pattern alone. Encourage them to say which foot they place on each footprint.

21. Post Office

Materials:

- Pencils, markers, crayons.
- Paper, envelopes, address books, postcards, junk mail: donated by families.
- Stamp pads and stamps, rubber date stamps.
- Cash register.
- Mailbags: an old pocketbook with straps.
- Mailboxes: old shoeboxes.
- A scale.

Group Size: Small group or class.

Procedure: Set up a “post office” in the Dramatic Play area.

Do the following:

- Participate in children’s play in the post office. Create opportunities to teach the directional/positional concepts you want children to learn. Comment on what children are doing. For example, say: “Julie is doing a great job putting a stamp on the corner of the envelope.” “Mario put the letter into the mail slot on the front of the mailbox.”
- Encourage children to tell what they are doing. For example: “Look, I licked the back of the envelope.” “I am going to take out the letters and deliver them!”

CONCEPTS: Repeat this activity using other directional/positional words: in/out, closed/open, into/out of, front/back, behind/in front of, bottom/top, over/under, above/below, center/corner, right/left of self.