

EVERYDAY CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

When working with children who have sensory impairments such as vision and/or hearing impairment, it is essential to pay attention to the development of key concepts. Children with typical vision and hearing have the ability to learn without being directly involved in an activity. They can learn many skills by watching or hearing what others are doing. They learn from imitation. Children with sensory impairments must learn by *doing*. They must be allowed the opportunity to experience the *whole process*, first with their own body and then with objects. They must play with real objects as much as possible so learning is not incomplete or fragmented. It is also important to note that repetition of activities and experiences is very crucial in the development of concepts. A strong understanding of concepts lays the foundation for learning in many areas of the ECC, especially compensatory skills, independent living and orientation and mobility.

Examples of concepts to teach to children who have sensory impairments:

- Over//Under
- Ahead//Behind
- Top//Bottom
- Up//Down
- Between//Through
- Around//Beside
- Fast//Slow
- Rough//Smooth
- Smile//Frown
- On top of//Below
- In//Out
- Soft//Hard
- Right//Left
- Heavy//Light
- Hot//Warm//Cold
- Wet//Dry//Sticky
- Upside Down//Right Side Up
- Open//Closed
- Big//Little
- Long//Short
- Front//Back//Side
- Beginning//End
- Edge//End
- Some//A few//A lot//Many//Much (Quantities)
- Chewy//Crunchy
- Loud//Soft (Sound)
- High//Low (Pitch)
- Straight//Curved
- Full//Empty
- Together//Apart
- Early//Late (time concepts)
- Hard//Soft
- Near//Far

What Can You Do?

- ◆ *DESCRIBE*
- ◆ *MODEL*
- ◆ *ENSURE THE CHILD HAS HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES*

Other Related Concepts

- Qualities of materials: wood, plastic, metal, paper, glass & stone
- The sensation of walking on leaves, grass, sand, snow, rock, asphalt, mud etc...
- Causality: "what happens when...?", "what happens if...?"
- Understanding the difference between common surfaces like: carpet, tile, dirt, wood, metal, sand, gravel, glass, plastic, vinyl etc...
- Body part locations and functions: "Where is your nose? What do you use it for?"