

# Following three information carrying word instructions

## What are information carrying words?

An information carrying word (ICW) also known as a 'key word', is a word that carries *meaning* in an instruction. For a word to count as an ICW or key word the child has to make a 'choice' of some sort to complete the instruction correctly.

When working on ICW or Key words, we always use familiar words for the child. We are not testing their understanding of the individual words but their ability to **follow** a certain length instruction.

- We only know if a child is able to follow ICW successfully if they can follow the instruction without any additional prompts such as the adult looking, pointing or gesturing at the item/activity we want them to select.
- If they struggle to follow the instruction we may need to do some of these things to 'help' them achieve the instruction correctly.
- As they become more confident with this, we should aim to remove all additional prompts so we can check they can follow the instruction independently.

## Activity ideas

The ICW is underlined in the examples below. Remember the child needs to make a 'choice' for this item/action to make it count. Be creative and try to think of other examples with your child's favourite toys or activities.

- You will need a big and little teddy and doll (or animals) and a table and chair. Ask your child to: "Make the big teddy jump on the chair", "Make the little doll sit on the table", "Make the little teddy sleep on the table" etc.
- You will need a brush, a sponge and a big and little teddy and doll. Ask your child to: "Brush the big doll's tummy", "Clean the little teddy's ear"
- You will need two sets of objects in different colours objects (e.g. red and blue car and a red and blue ball) and table and chair: Ask your child to: "Put the blue car under the chair", "Put the red ball on the table"

## How can I use this in real life?

Think about all the opportunities across your day that you can practice following 4 ICWs with your child. This can be in everyday activities they enjoy as long as you are using familiar words and they only have to make one 'choice' to complete the instruction:

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| ○ Sorting out the washing                 | ○ Finding a certain colour sticker                           |
| ○ Finding items in the supermarket        | ○ Finding objects/animals in a book                          |
| ○ Playing with teddies/dolls/vehicles     | ○ Finding certain clothes to wear                            |
| ○ Requesting different colour paints/pens | ○ Choosing a certain colour/size brick when building a tower |



## Remember

- ❖ If your child is currently working on following 4 ICWs, they won't be ready to follow this on their own in day to day life.
- ❖ Think about the 'instructions' you give them on a day to day basis.
- ❖ If you really NEED them to follow an instruction then try to simplify this to 3 ICWs and use gestures/pointing to help them be successful.
- ❖ When you have time to support them, you can make this harder so they can practise their target for following 4 ICWs, with your help.

