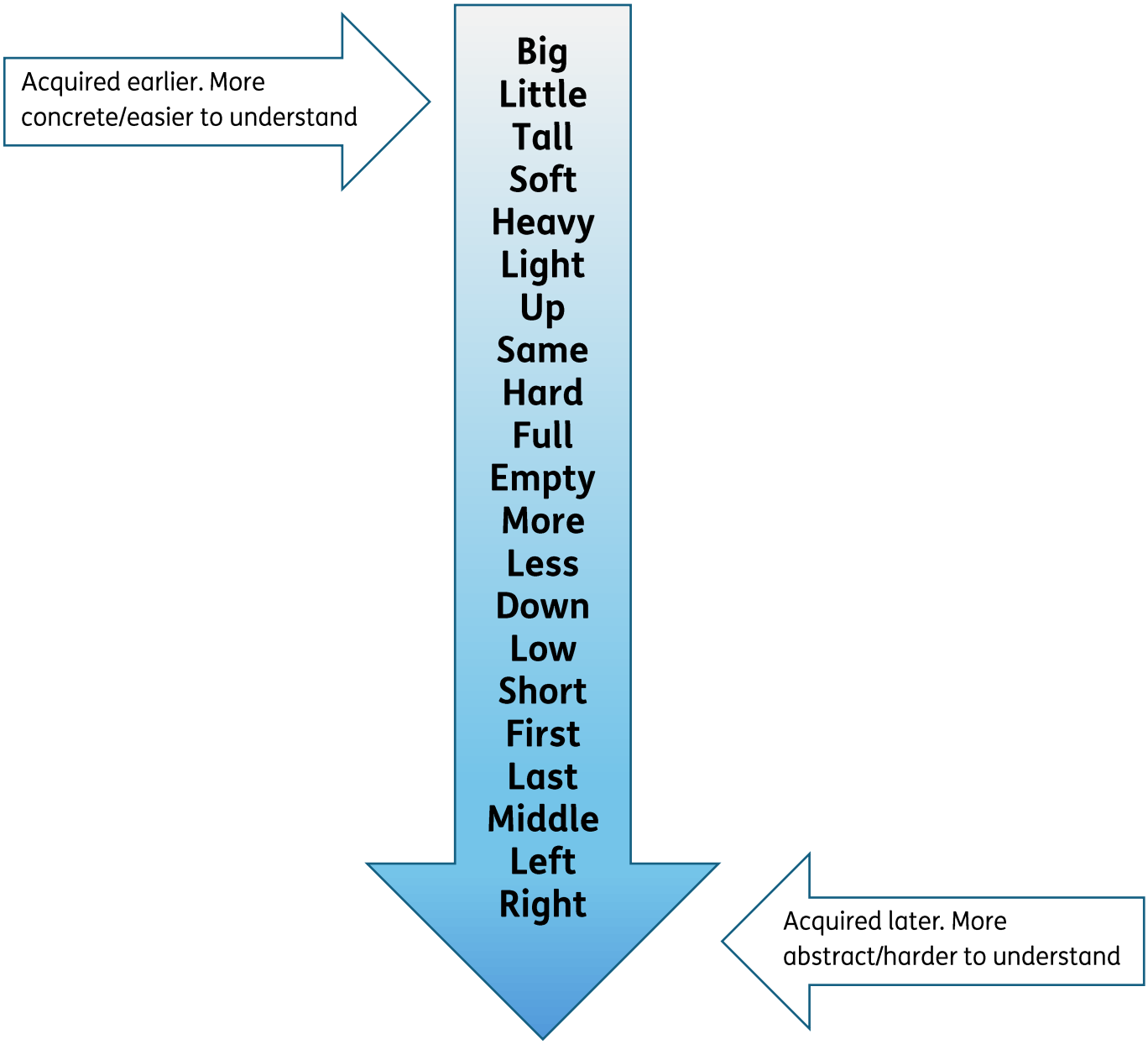
## How to develop:

# Your child's understanding of concepts

### What is a concept?

Concept words tell us information e.g. about size, location, position, time etc. Children are more likely to learn concept words by experiencing them in real situations. Repetition and continuously modelling is the key to helping children to learn, understand, and use new words. Some concept words are more abstract and develop later than others. ***Some***




examples include:

See “how to” guide for information on preposition concepts here

## Strategies

- Use Makaton signs or gestures to support.
- **Use a multisensory approach** i.e. different sensory elements throughout activities where possible – look, feel, listen, smell etc.
- **Where possible, work on concept words in opposite pairs** e.g. big/little, hard/soft etc. Introduce 1 word on its own e.g. “big”, before introducing the opposite “little”. Initially describe opposite items as “not big”, until the child has grasped the “big” concept on its own, then move on to introducing “little”.
- **Generalise the concept/s you’re targeting across the day** e.g. when you come across something “big”/ “little” during a lesson in class.

## Activity ideas

**Objects/people**
Use lots of pairs of toys/objects/people from the child’s environment/day-to-day life to show the child the meaning of the concept you are targeting e.g. label “big”/“little” balls, cups, dolls, superheroes, cars; arrange toy items in a line facing the same direction and talk about the one that is “first”, “middle”, and “last” etc.

**Pictures**
Look at pictures, books, photos to target the concept word e.g. label “big”/“little” things you can see.

**Collages**
Use a catalogue / magazine / newspaper. Point to, name, cut out and stick on paper all the items you can describe using the concept/s you are targeting e.g. create a collage of all the “big” items and one of all the “little” items.

**Matching**
Match objects to pictures in relation to the concepts you are targeting e.g. match “big” objects to pictures of the “big” object and “little” objects to “little” pictures.

**Drawing**
Make drawings related to the concept/s you are targeting and compare e.g. draw “big” and “little” everyday items e.g. clothes, food, transport etc.

**Hunting**
Get your child to find everyday items related to the concepts you’re targeting e.g. “big”/ “little” shoes, socks, plates, balls, cups etc.

**Sorting**

Put all the objects / pictures corresponding to the concept/s you are targeting in one pile/box together e.g. sort all the “big” items together and all the “little” ones together.

**Role Play**

You can do this with different games e.g. washing clothes game, supermarket cashier game, farming/zoo game, transport game - request big/little items (clothes, food, animals, transport toys) that your child must find. Then swap roles and your child must ask you for big/little items. When carrying out this activity make some deliberate errors to see if your child corrects you (and so you can see if they have and understanding of these concepts). If your child does not notice the mistake, correct it yourself and reinforce the correct answer verbally and with gesture.

**Story**

Read a story that targets the concepts you are working on e.g. for “big” and “little”, you could read *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* emphasising the size of the bears, chairs, bowls, beds etc.