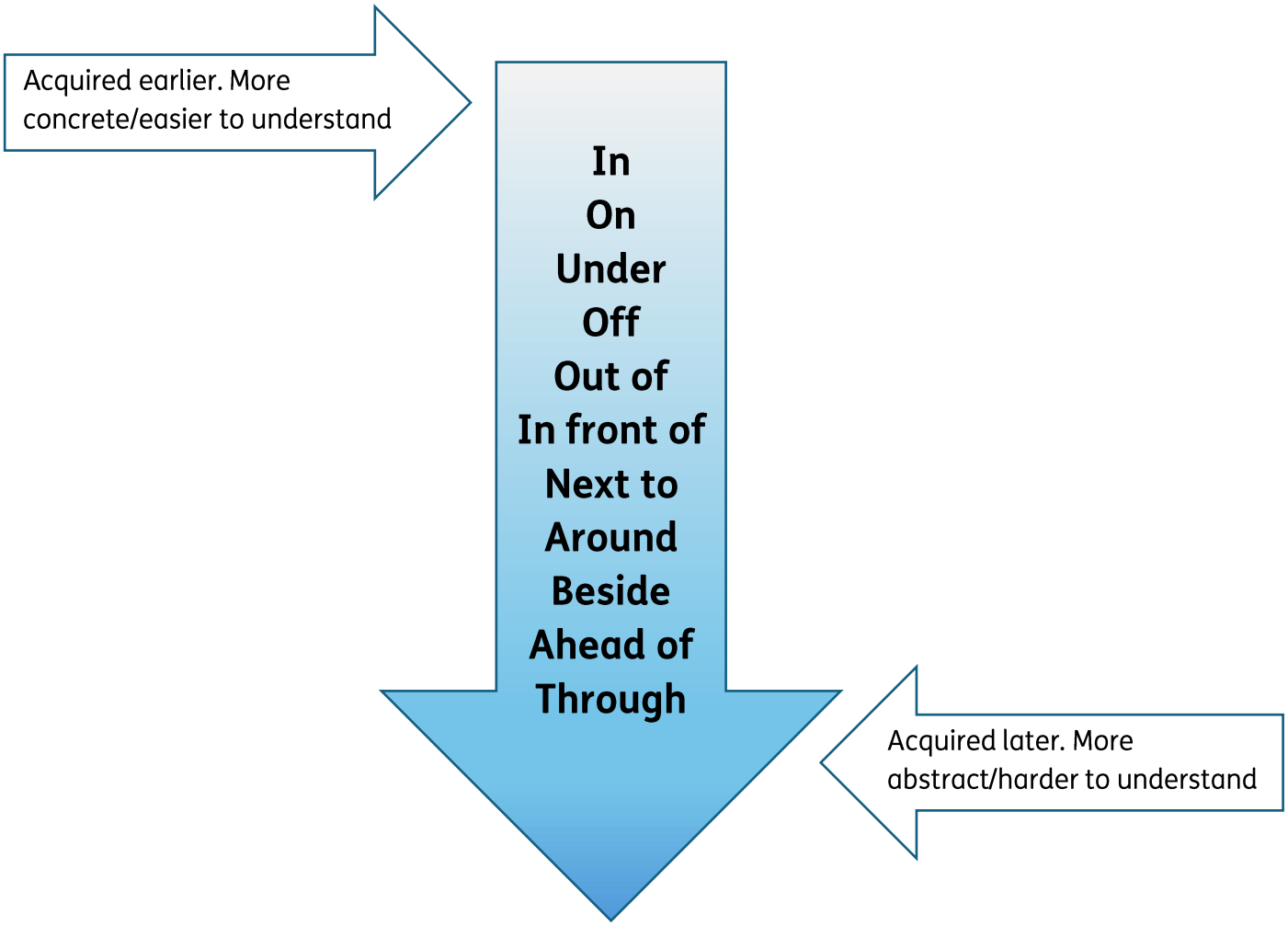
How to develop:

Your child's understanding and use of prepositions

What is a preposition?

Preposition concepts tell us information about where something is. Children are more likely to learn preposition 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 preposition words are more abstract and develop later than others.

Some examples include:



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.
- **Focus on the target preposition words on their own first** before expecting the child to understand them in a longer instruction. When they understand the preposition word you are targeting, you can add it to longer instructions – e.g. see "how to" guide for information on "key word instructions" and "following instructions with parts" here.
- **Generalise the prepositions** to different opportunities/contexts across the day e.g. provide instructions with the prepositions you're targeting, during classroom activities.

Activity ideas

Toys/Objects

Choose some everyday items/toys/objects the child likes to help practise the prepositions. You can use anything so long as you can move the items around and you use things that the toys/items can go in, on or under e.g. teddy, doll, doll's house furniture, a box, cars, pencils, tables, chairs.

First show your child what the prepositions mean before expecting them to follow the instruction for you.

When the child understands the instructions, give them an opportunity to "be the teacher" and give you instructions/give instructions to their peers. Choose a toy, e.g. a teddy, and demonstrate using the preposition, e.g. put it on the table and say "teddy on the table!" Emphasise the preposition.

Put teddy under the table and say "teddy under the table!" Put teddy in a box and say "teddy in the box!".

Pictures and books

Look through picture books together and talk about where things are e.g. "the pig is in the barn", "the flowers are on the table", "the dog is under the bed". Ask the child to find things in pictures e.g. "what is under the bed?".

Routines

Give the child instructions to follow during familiar routines, e.g., washing and dressing: E.g. "put your toothbrush in the pot", "put your jumper in the drawer", "put your cup on the table", "put your chair under the table".

Treasure hunt

Encourage the child to hide objects for someone else to find by giving them instructions to follow e.g. "put the hat under the chair", "put the ball under the bed".

Preposition obstacle course

Give the child instructions to complete an obstacle course around the playground/hall/ classroom using preposition words e.g. "go under the slide, on the trampoline, over the bridge". Support the child to provide instructions to their peers to complete the obstacle course.

Hide and seek with objects/toys

The child can tell you where to put the objects.