

# Before and After

Understanding the concept of *before* and *after* is tricky! For example, consider these two sentences:

'Brush your teeth before you say hello to grandma'  
'Before you brush your teeth, say hello to grandma'

In one sentence you brush your teeth first, and in the other you say hello to grandma first. The position of the word *before* has a big impact on the order in which you carry out the instructions.

As this is a tricky concept, make sure your child understands other terms such as *first*, *next* and *last* before attempting to work on *before* and *after*.

## Before:

Begin by working on *before*. Start with instructions that have *before* in the middle of the sentence. This tends to be easier because you follow the instructions in the order that you hear them.



E.g. 'Clap your hands (1) before you touch your nose (2)'.

Once your child can do this, introduce instructions where *before* is at the beginning of the sentence. This is a bit trickier because you follow the instructions in reverse order:



E.g. If told 'Before you clap your hands (1<sup>st</sup> instruction), touch your nose (2<sup>nd</sup> instruction)' you should touch your nose (2) and then clap your hands (1).

## After:

Once your child has mastered *before* you can introduce the concept of *after*. Begin by focusing on sentences with *after* at the start of the sentence.



E.g. 'After you have drawn a square (1), draw a circle (2)'.

Once your child can do this, introduce *after* in the middle of the sentence:



E.g. If told 'Draw a square (1<sup>st</sup> instruction) after you have drawn a circle (2<sup>nd</sup> instruction)' you should first draw a circle (2) and then draw a square (1).

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## Activities:

- Simon Says: Give instructions such as 'jump up and down *before* you nod your head'. Once your child is confident in following your instructions they can practice giving you instructions and telling you if you followed them correctly.
- Drawing/Colouring: Give instructions such as '*after* you have drawn a heart, draw a smiley face'.
- Barrier Game: Each have an identical set of objects (e.g. Lego bricks). Put your objects in a line, but keep your line hidden from view. Then give your child instructions so they can put the objects in the same order. E.g. 'Put the red brick *before* the yellow brick'.
- Picture Sequences: Use pictures of everyday activities (e.g. making some toast). Give instructions to help your child put the pictures in the correct order. E.g. '*before* you butter your toast, put the bread in the toaster'. Once the sequence is complete, talk about what happens before/after. E.g. 'what did we do *before* buttering the toast?'.

## Generalisation:

Once your child can follow *before* and *after* during structured activities they will need to practice during real life situations. For example:

- When coming in from school you can tell your child '*Before* you wash your hands, give me your bag'.
- Whilst your child is playing you can say 'You can have the tablet *after* your sister has had a turn'.

If your child makes a mistake, repeat the instruction and emphasise the word *before* or *after*. It may help to use a visual support and point to this as you give the instruction:

<b>2</b>	<b>after</b>	<b>1</b>
You can have a biscuit	<i>after</i>	you've put your rubbish in the bin.