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Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale

Education Committee

**4.10 Learning to use ‘big’ and ‘little’**

**Why is this important?  
‘Big’ and ‘little’ are important opposites. They form the building blocks of  
more abstract concept development and give children a means to describe  
the world around them. They are often amongst the earliest adjectives  
(describing words) that children learn. Usually ‘big’ is learned before ‘little’.**

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What to do  
• Gather together:  
★ A selection of objects – one ‘big’ and one ‘little’ (e.g. ‘big’ cup and ‘little’ cup;  
‘big’ pencil and ‘little’ pencil).  
• Explain that you are going to take it in turns to tidy up and put the things away into a box/bag.  
• Put out a pair of items (e.g. two cups, one ‘big’ and one ‘little’).**

**Tell the child to find the ‘big cup’. Put it in the box.  
• Ask the child:  
★ Adult: ‘What did you put in the box?’  
★ Child: ‘Big (cup)’.  
• Point to the remaining cup:  
★ Adult: ‘What shall I put in the box?’  
★ Child: ‘Little (cup)’.  
• During outdoor play, ask the child to jump into a ‘big’/‘little’ hoop. ‘Step up’ by  
asking: ‘Which hoop are you in?’  
• There are numerous opportunities throughout the day for teaching ‘big’ and ‘little’ – laying the table (‘big’ spoon, ‘little’ spoon), matching shoes etc.**