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Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale

Education Committee

**7.6 Understanding and using four-word sentences**

**Why is this important?  
As language develops, children need to understand increasingly more  
complex instructions and use longer sentences to describe and explain.  
This helps expand vocabulary and link words together using ‘a’ and ‘the’  
as sentences become more like the mature adult form.**

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What to do  
• Ask the child to find two favourite toys**

**(e.g. Spiderman and Batman, Fifi and Dora).  
• Find a toy table and chair (or use a real one if necessary).  
• Explain that the toys are being naughty by hiding all over the place. Tell the child  
where to put them – try to make this as fun and outrageous as you can!  
• The child will need to understand four different parts of the sentence to get the  
instruction correct:  
★ Person (Spiderman or Batman) ★ Action (‘jump’/‘sit’/‘stand’/‘lie’)  
★ Preposition (‘on’/‘under’) ★ Place (‘table’/‘chair’)  
• Ask the child to:  
★ ‘Make Fifi sit under the chair.’ ★ ‘Make Batman jump on the table.’  
★ ‘Make Dora lie under the table.’  
• If a child gets part of the instruction wrong, repeat the instruction emphasising the key words where the correction needs to be made (e.g. if the child places the toy ‘on’ the table instead of ‘under’, you would say ‘Dora’s lying on the table. Make Dora lie under the table.’ If the child doesn’t correct the error, move the toy to the right place and then repeat the instruction.  
• When the child has put the toy in the right place, ask ‘What did you do?’ Encourage all four keys words to describe the placement of the toy.**