

Concept Development: What to expect and when

What are concepts?

Concepts are ideas or thoughts. Some can be represented by things we can see, for example size could be represented by putting something big next to something small. Others are harder to show using pictures. For example, it is difficult to explain what 'feelings' or 'time' are using pictures.



There are three main sub-types of concepts:

1. Concrete concepts: relate to objects or things that are tangible (e.g., a car, a chair).
2. Semi-concrete concepts: relate to an action, colour, position, or something that can be demonstrated but not held in one's hand (e.g., jumping, behind, red).
3. Abstract concepts: include feelings (e.g., love, nervousness).

Age	Concepts
2-3 Years Old	Comprehending position concepts: <i>on; off; in; out; up; down; under; top; open; shut.</i> Comprehending size concepts: <i>big; small/little; long.</i> Comprehending concepts: <i>stop; go/start; loud; quiet; heavy; soft; fast; hot; cold.</i>
3-4 Years Old	Comprehending position concepts: <i>on; off; in; out; up; down; under; top; open; shut; bottom; behind; first; near.</i> Comprehending size concepts: <i>big; small/little; long; short (length) – emerging; short (height).</i> Comprehending quantity concepts; <i>every; none.</i> Comprehending concepts: <i>stop; go/start; loud; quiet; heavy; soft; fast; hot; cold; hard; slow; light (weight); many colours.</i>



Age	Concepts
4-5 Years Old	<p>Comprehending position concepts: <i>bottom; behind; first; near; middle; around; away from; between; through; next to/beside; last</i> by mid-late 4 years.</p> <p>Comprehending size concepts: <i>short (length); short (height); tall; fat</i> by mid-late 4 years.</p> <p>Comprehending quantity concepts; <i>most; few</i> by mid-late 4 years.</p> <p>Comprehending position concepts: <i>in front; in a line; corner; middle</i> by late 4-5 years.</p> <p>Comprehending size concept <i>thin</i> by late 4-5 years.</p> <p>Comprehending quantity concept <i>pair</i> by late 4-5 years.</p> <p>Comprehending concepts: <i>same; different (size); different (function)</i> by late 4-5 years.</p>
5-6 Years Old	<p>Comprehending position concepts <i>in front; in a line; corner; middle</i>.</p> <p>Comprehending size concepts <i>short (length); short (height); tall; fat thin</i>.</p> <p>Comprehending quantity concepts; <i>most; few; pair</i>.</p> <p>Comprehending concepts: <i>same; different (size); different (function)</i>.</p> <p>Comprehending time concepts: <i>yesterday; tomorrow; morning; afternoon; later</i>.</p>
6-7 Years Old	<p>Comprehending position concepts <i>left and right</i>.</p> <p>Comprehending concepts: <i>same; different; season; time of day</i>.</p>

What concepts do children understand in Key Stage 2?

Children in Key Stage 2 will start to understand more complicated concepts such as time, money and space/directions. These are known as 'abstract' concepts because they include things that can't be seen or represented easily by a picture or object.



Why is this important?

Many parts of the national curriculum for Key Stage 2 need the understanding of concepts, for example time, number and money for maths, and also more specific concepts such as 'climate zones' and 'vegetation belts', which are taught as part of Geography. Key Stage 2 teaching should also support the understanding of more complex concepts.

How do I know if my child understands concepts?

They will be able to talk about things like 'time' e.g. using words like 'tomorrow', 'soon', and 'yesterday'. They understand words around a concept e.g. knowing that 'expensive' means that something costs *more* money.