

Space and Place at a Glance

What Are Space and Place?

Space and place knowledge includes understanding:

- Where things are located relative to other people and objects.
- How to get from one place to another.

Why Is Learning About Space and Place Important?

- Space and place knowledge helps with everyday tasks, like remembering where things are and how to get places, such as the route from home to school.
- Practicing space and place skills has been shown to promote children's math thinking.

What Do Children Need to Know About Space and Place?

- **How to describe the location of objects and people:** "Sam is standing behind Bianca and in front of Alex."
- **How to use simple maps:** For example, when walking to the park.
- **How objects or scenes look from different perspectives:** "What would you see if you moved to the other side of the room?" or "What does someone on the other side of the room see?" This is called perspective taking.



The couch is in front of the window. The cat is on top of the couch. There are plants next to and behind the couch.

How Can We Help Children Learn Space and Place?

Talk About Space and Place Throughout the Day

- Above and below
- In front of and behind
- Over and under
- Inside and outside
- Near and far
- Right and left
- On top and beneath
- Between and in the middle
- Beside and next to
- Around

Ideas for Exploring Space and Place During:

Centers/Small Groups

Creating Copies: Children use blocks to copy a two-dimensional design. They pay attention to the relative positions of blocks as they transform a two-dimensional image into a three-dimensional structure.

Math Moments

Move Using Spatial Words: Instruct children how to move their bodies using space and place vocabulary, for example: "Shake your hands above your head. Now, shake your hands below your knees."

How Can We Support Learning About Space and Place at Home?

Encourage families to:

- **Talk about space and place every day:** At the playground, give instructions like, "Go over the bridge, then down the slide." When reading, discuss the location of characters and objects in the pictures.
- **Use space and place vocabulary when playing games:** For example, when playing Simon Says, caregivers can instruct children to "lift your hands high, kneel down low." When playing I Spy, they can give clues like, "I spy something that is on the counter and next to the fridge."
- **Use and create maps:** Use maps or GPS to discuss the routes to familiar places and to guide children as they walk around their neighborhood. Families can also make their own maps, including treasure maps to locate hidden objects in their home.