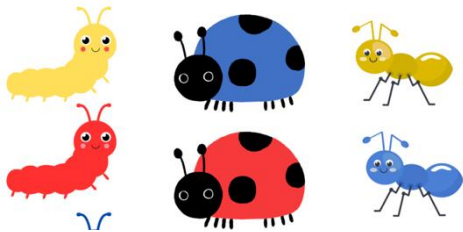


## SPRING CRITICAL ELEMENTS

## THINK ABOUT . . .

Receptive language and auditory skills are the building blocks for strong communication—and one fun way to strengthen them is by following *critical element directions*. This spring-themed activity uses playful bugs and prepositions like on, under, above, below, and next to, to boost your child's listening and language skills. As you give directions like, *"Put the ladybug under the flower"* or *"Place the bee next to the leaf,"* your child practices tuning in, understanding key words, and following multi-step directions. It's a joyful way to support language development—while sneaking in a little springtime fun!



## MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Spring Critical Elements Printable
- Tape or sticky tack
- Scissors

## PREPARATION:

- 1- Print and cut the items on the Spring Critical Elements Printable
- 2- Tape or stick up the grass on a wall or door
  - If desired, the grass and other objects can be glued to a large piece of butcher paper
- 3- Bugs will be taped/glued to the wall/paper during the activity

## VOCABULARY:

- |           |                |
|-----------|----------------|
| • Above   | • Butterfly    |
| • Below   | • Worm         |
| • Next to | • Caterpillar  |
| • Under   | • Ladybug      |
| • On top  | • Ant          |
| • In      | • Grass        |
| • Yellow  | • Tree         |
| • Blue    | • House        |
| • Red     | • Mushroom     |
|           | • Flower       |
|           | • Wishing Well |
|           | • Pond         |

## ACTIVITY

- 1- **Set the scene:** Lay out the spring-themed props on a table or floor. Let your child explore and name each item together.
- 2- **Introduce the bugs:** Show your child the bug pictures and say, "These little bugs need help finding where to go! They are all different colors so we must be sure to listen so the right bug can make it to the right place!"
- 3- **Give a critical element direction:** Use specific vocabulary and a preposition, like:
  - "Put the butterfly on the flower."
  - "Place the blue bee under the tree."
  - "Put the yellow ladybug next to the house."
 Emphasize the key words and repeat if needed.
- 4- **Let your child follow the direction:** See if they can place the correct bug in the right spot. Offer additional support if needed.
- 5- **Add challenge as they grow:** Increase complexity by adding more elements (colors, prepositions, or location) or two-step directions like:
  - "First put the bee on the flower, then place the ladybug under the tree."
- 6- **Switch roles:** Let your child give you directions! This helps build expressive language and reinforces understanding.
- 7- **Celebrate success:** Cheer them on and talk about where each bug ended up using full sentences: *"The bee is under the leaf!"*
  - If using butcher paper, you and your child can draw additional elements to add onto the springtime scene!

## HELPFUL TIPS:

- This activity can be catered to all levels!
  - 2 critical elements: bug + preposition (only use grass and no other objects)
  - 3 critical elements: color + bug + preposition (only use grass and no other objects)
  - 4 critical elements: color + bug + preposition + location (use grass and all other objects)
- Teach skills for conversation breakdown when your child needs support completing a critical elements direction. Use phrases like "You can ask me to repeat." Or "Tell me what you remember/heard."
- Extend this activity by using real objects found in your backyard!

Special thanks to graduate students in the Listening and Spoken Language Deaf Education graduate training program at Utah State University. These pages can be reproduced for educational purposes.



