



Learning to Sort

Your child was born to sort by color, shape and size. Young children love to play matching games to help with the laundry and to notice different things in the house, at the park, on the bus. Help your child sort objects – shoes, socks, leaves, toys. You are helping your child develop math skills. Try these suggestions.

INFANT:

- Give simple choices of toys to play with. Hold a toy in each hand. Offer each toy by name: "Would you like the rattle or the bear?" Watch to see which toy your baby grabs.
- Let your child play with foam numbers, letters, or shapes in the bathtub. As your baby gets older, help her to sort them by color or shape.

TODDLER:

- Play matching games with your child. Cut pictures of animals out of magazines and glue them to sturdy cardboard. Make sure there are matches: 2 pictures of horses, 2 pictures of sheep, etc. Lay the animal cards face up on the floor. Ask your child to find the animal cards that are the same. As your child gets older, play with the cards face down.
- Have a Car Wash. Let your child pick out a few of her toy cars. Help your child make a pile for dirty cars and one for clean cars. Fill a bucket with soapy water. Give you child a rag or a sponge. Watch her get everything squeaky clean. Have a towel nearby to make drying off easy when she is all done.
- Play the Clean-Up Game. Have baskets or boxes for your child's toys or books. For example, you may want to have a box for blocks and a different box for trains. Help your child put his toys in the right box at the end of the day.

PRESCHOOLERS:

- Make reading a part of every day. Choose books that help your child to count or sort.
- Play Sorting Games during everyday activities. Have your child help you unload the dishwasher. Ask for all of the spoons, forks, or cups. Have your child help you do the laundry. Ask for all the socks. Then help him sort the socks into pairs by color or type. After they are all properly matched, count the pairs, explaining the difference between single and pairs.
- Use playing cards to count and recognize numbers. Help your child to sort the cards in number order or by suit.
- Put a large amount of pennies on the table. Have your child sort the shiny pennies from the dull pennies.
- Make a game as you walk with your child, "Let's find all the people with hats" or "I'll spot red cars and you spot cars in your favorite color."