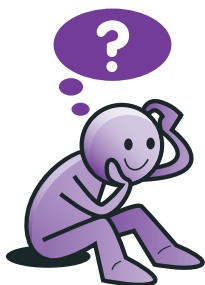


Section 5.9

Understanding what things are for



Why is this important?

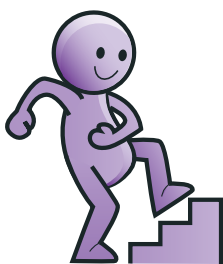
Children begin to be able to categorise things into groups by learning their functions (e.g. things to eat, wear, drive). This also helps acquire more vocabulary.

What to do

- Gather together some familiar toys/objects:
 - ★ Cup, brush, apple, chair, hat, pencil.
- Start by putting out two things and ask the child to find an object by its function:
 - ★ ‘What do we *eat*?’
 - ★ ‘What can we *sit* on?’
 - ★ ‘What do we *wear*?’

N.B. Remember not to look at or point to the object for which you are asking.

- Guide the child to the right choice if you need to. Repeat the instruction and demonstrate the function (e.g. ‘*Sit* doll on the chair’, ‘Pretend to *eat* the apple’).



Step up

- Increase the number of objects so that the child has to find the right one from a choice of four or five.
- Include some things that share function (e.g. two things to wear) and ask the child to find *all* the things to eat with (e.g. spoon, fork) or *all* the things you can wear. Talk about the differences (e.g. cut hair with scissors but cut an apple with a knife).
- Use pictures of things from two different categories (e.g. things to wear and things to eat). Mix the pictures up and encourage the child to sort the pictures into their two functions.
- Share books and ask the child to find various things to wear or eat, etc. Talk about what people are doing with objects in the pictures.
- Talk about the function of objects that are encountered during everyday activities (e.g. getting dressed, walking to school, doing the shopping).

- Play a guessing game. Take it in turns to choose a picture card (these can be things cut out from magazines, etc). Keeping it hidden, describe the object, using function as the first clue, e.g.
 - ★ Adult chooses picture (scissors).
 - ★ Adult: 'You cut with it.'
 - ★ Child: 'Knife.'
 - ★ Adult continues with further clues (e.g. 'You cut paper/hair with it').

Step down

- Let the child play with the toys/objects and talk about what they are (e.g. wearing the hat, eating the apple).
- Use a gesture/sign along with the function.
- Use doll/teddy or a different toy character to demonstrate and name the functions (e.g. 'Doll's *wearing* the hat'; 'Teddy's *writing* with the pencil'). Emphasise the function and let the child copy the function using teddy.
- Sing 'Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush' and make up new verses miming the functions (e.g. this is the way we eat an apple, cut our hair, wear our scarf, drink from a cup).

