

## Other things to try: 5c

# Sorting things that go together and being able to name the category



### Why is this important?

Sorting into categories develops vocabulary skills by allowing children to compare how objects are similar, how they belong within certain groups and also the function of the groups (e.g. food – eat, clothes – wear, vehicles – drive). It also helps children learn new vocabulary and the category name (e.g. transport, vegetables).

### What to do

- Gather pictures from familiar categories:
  - ★ Clothes
  - ★ Food
  - ★ Animals
  - ★ Transport
  - ★ Furniture

N.B. the pictures can be cut out of magazines and catalogues or printed from the computer.

- Put out two boxes: choose two categories (e.g. food vs. clothes). Explain to the child that the food goes in one box and the clothes in the other. Give the child a picture (e.g. hat) and ask the child:
  - ★ ‘Is the hat food or clothes?’
- As you say the category names (e.g. food/clothes), point to the corresponding box to prompt the child.
- If the child is successful, reinforce: ‘Well done, hats are clothes. We wear a hat on our head.’
- If the child fails to respond or puts the hat in the ‘food’ box, try again. If the child still finds the activity difficult, ask:
  - ★ ‘Do we *wear* the hat or *eat* the hat?’ – or provide a physical prompt.
- If the child fails to respond or doesn’t correct the previous attempt, you post the picture and explain why, e.g.
  - ★ ‘The hat goes in the clothes box. We wear the hat on our head so it’s clothes. Let’s try another one.’
- When all the pictures have been sorted, ask the child to name the category (e.g. food).



## Step up

- Introduce a range of different categories (e.g. furniture, transport) and less familiar vocabulary (e.g. courgette, swimsuit).
- Try sorting into subcategories (e.g. hot vs. cold foods, winter vs. summer clothes).
- Play odd-one-out games where the child has to say why two pictures are the same and one is different.
- Let the child decide what the categories are (e.g. furniture/animals) and then let him/her sort the items.
- Have more than two categories to choose between.

## Step down

- Start the category off showing where the items go. Have several pictures that are the same to provide reinforcement through repetition.
- Begin by sorting real objects (e.g. play food vs. doll's clothes).
- Have a toy-plate for the food to go on and a picture of a washing machine for the clothes so that the child can both relate the items to the category and also see what has already been matched.
- Start by teaching one category only (e.g. food) and then introduce clothes before mixing the two.
- Use food and clothes items that the child knows (e.g. apple rather than aubergine).

