Section 8.2

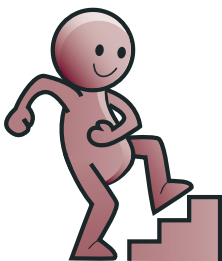# Understanding that things that go together are not always the same

Why is this important?

Children need to learn how words relate to each other but also how they differ from other words (e.g. an apple and carrot are both foods but apples are fruits whereas carrots are vegetables). This helps to build semantics (word meaning) and expands vocabulary.

What to do

- Gather together some pictures of items in a particular category (e.g. food). Use magazines, supermarket promotional leaflets, cut the labels off tins, packets and jars or draw some foods, to get a range of items.
- Using a scrapbook, exercise book or plain paper, think about how the food items could be divided further, e.g.
  - ★ Fruits vs. vegetables.
  - ★ Hot vs. cold foods.
  - ★ Things eaten for breakfast/lunch/dinner/tea.
  - ★ Hard vs. soft foods.
- Choose two groups (e.g. hot vs. cold foods). Stick all the hot foods on one page and the cold foods on another. Talk about the foods together.

Step up

- Talk about the differences between foods to extend vocabulary (e.g. as together you cut and stick a picture of ice-cream, say that ice-cream is made from milk, is kept in the freezer, is sweet and has different flavours). In this way you are teaching properties.
- Move on to more complex contrasts (e.g. fruits vs. vegetables).
- Some foods (e.g. carrots) can be eaten hot or cold so if the child can cope, include a third category for these foods.

- Other categories to sub-divide include:
    - ★ Clothes – summer/winter; boys/girls; lady/man; work/play; above/below waist; indoor/outdoor.
    - ★ Animals – land/sea; farm/jungle; hot places/cold places; four legged/two legged; walk/swim/fly.
    - ★ Transport – land/sea/fly; wheels/no wheels; fast/slow.

Step down

- Use foods which fall within the child's experience.
- Encourage the child to try different foods, and talk about them as you do so – this will stimulate the ability to remember and recall the vocabulary; it also encourages multi-sensory learning.
- Start with easier contrasts (e.g. hot vs. cold).
- Match items to his/her group – you may have the same item/picture more than once.