

Guess My Rule

Targeted skill

Young children are expected to see similarities and differences between objects and group them accordingly. They are also learning to use reason and logically support their thinking, that is, use and apply problem-solving strategies.

Materials

- ◆ small objects such as colored blocks or buttons
- ◆ envelopes

What to do

Place several small objects in the playing area. Think of a way that similar objects might be grouped and begin to select the objects that fit that rule, saying, "This object fits my rule. Can you guess my rule?" Keep selecting objects that fit the rule until your child can identify the rule.

For example, if your rule is "buttons with two holes," first select a large, flat button with two holes and a small, square button with two holes from the group. Say, "These buttons fit my rule. Can you guess my rule?" After that, select more buttons that fit the rule. You can also identify objects that do not fit the rule. Give your child support as he or she discovers the rule.

Extending the activity

- ✦ As your child gets better at this activity, increase the difficulty of the rule. For example, make the rule something that is not obvious. Often children look for rules that apply to colors or shapes first, so select rules that involve other attributes.
- ✦ This activity can be done anywhere. Create groups using various rules, such as girls with long hair, boys wearing shorts, cars with the windows rolled down, men wearing hats.
- ✦ Ask your child to help you list all the attributes of a particular object. Then use one of those attributes as your rule.

What your child is practicing

With opportunities to explain his or her thinking and logically work through a problem until he or she finds a solution, your child is practicing lifelong mathematical skills.