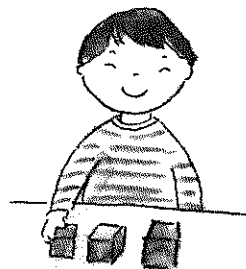


Small, Medium, and Large

Targeted skill

Young children are expected to sort items by size. Judgment and decision-making are also called for.



Materials

- ◆ objects that come in small, medium, and large sizes (for example, washcloth, hand towel, and bath towel; salad fork, dinner fork, and serving fork; dime, nickel, and quarter; a golf ball, a softball, and a soccer ball)
- ◆ 2 sheets of 8 ½-by-11-inch paper

What to do

To make the sorting mats for this game, simply use a large piece of paper for the large mat (an 8 ½-by-11-inch sheet of paper). Then cut another sheet in half for the medium mat (8 ½-by-5 ½ inches), and cut the other half in half again for the small mat (5 ½-by-4 ¼ inches).

At first, provide several of the objects listed above and encourage your child to put the small object on the small sorting mat, the medium object on the medium sorting mat, and the large object on the large sorting mat. This task seems quite easy from an adult perspective, but understanding and sorting by relative size is an early math concept that young children need to practice before they master.

After your child has done this several times, challenge him or her to go around the house and look for things that come in different sizes (pieces of clothing from family members—socks, shoes, shirts, slacks, and so on).

Extending the activity

Once your child seems to grasp the ability to identify small, medium, and large objects, challenge him or her to draw small, medium, and large things.

What your child is practicing

In this activity your child is sorting objects by their size. Children seem to naturally sort things by color, shape, and size. Watch your child with a handful of candy and he or she will often separate the candy into the different colors. Many young children sort their cars by color and sort their blocks by their shapes. You can use this tendency to sort things to make learning early math skills a natural part of your child's life.