

Sorting the Laundry



Targeted skill

Children are expected to sort objects according to their attributes and describe how those groups are formed.

Materials

- ◆ a basket of clean (or dirty) clothes

What to do

At laundry time, ask your child to “be a detective” and help you solve the problem of sorting the laundry into different groups.

Tell him or her what groups you want the clothes to be divided into, such as light-colored clothes and dark-colored clothes; dad’s socks and children’s socks; big brother’s clothes and little brother’s clothes.

Then indicate an area where the different groups should be placed, and give your child the first piece of clothing. As your child correctly sorts the clothes, encourage him or her to talk about why each object belongs in that particular group. For example, he or she might say, “This sock is small so I know that it belongs in the child pile, not the grown-up pile.”

Sorting the Laundry *(continued)*

Extending the activity

- ✦ The ways to sort the laundry are limited only by your imagination. Your child can sort by color, the clothing's use, size, shape, and so on.
- ✦ Your child can also create patterns with the laundry, using large and small socks to make patterns (ABAB, AAB, AABB, and so on).
- ✦ Taking the piles of sorted laundry to the correct place also helps your child associate an object with its use, such as returning bath towels to the bathroom and dish towels to the kitchen.
- ✦ Your child could extend the sorting activity into a matching activity. For example, after sorting socks into "children" and "grown-up" piles, he or she could then match the single socks into pairs.
- ✦ Laundry time offers lots of opportunities for mathematical learning. For example, calling attention to the way you measure the detergent makes your child aware of how measurement is used in daily activities. Counting the number of shirts or socks offers a chance for learning counting and comparing quantities.

What your child is practicing

By sorting the laundry, your child is practicing grouping objects by their attributes. He or she has to remember the distinguishing qualities of each group and make decisions accordingly to place the objects in the correct group.