

Sort It Out

Preschool-Kindergarten

Sorting and matching activities introduce young children to many mathematical operations, including classification and measurement.

What You Need

- * Pairs of socks of different sizes and colors
- * Laundry

What to Do

* When you're sorting and folding clean laundry, have your child join you and do such things as the following:

—Hold up a pair of matching socks that belong to her and say, for example, "These socks go together because each sock is red and each one fits the same size foot—yours!"

—Pick up another sock and ask your child to look through the pile for the sock that matches it. When she chooses a sock, have her tell you how she knows that it's the right one.

—Continue holding up socks until your child has paired them all. If she mispairs any socks, gently correct her by asking her to tell the color of each sock and to put the socks together to see if they are the same size.

—After you've done this activity several times, let your child choose the socks for you to pair. (Occasionally choose a wrong sock to give her the chance to help you correct your mistake!)

* Have your child help you sort the laundry to be washed. Ask her, for example, to put all the blue things together, all the whites, all the towels and so forth. You might also have her count as she sorts. How many towels are there? How many shirts? Try saying, "I count five shirts. Is that right?" Then have your child count aloud the number of shirts. From time to time, give an incorrect number so that she can count the items one by one and show you that you've made a mistake.

Children need to see that grown-ups also make math mistakes occasionally and that they identify their mistakes and find ways to correct them.