

Help at home

Sorting, matching, ordering and comparing

Sorting, matching, ordering and comparing are all the very basics of early maths and your children learn these from when they are babies. They are all linked to each other and are usually learned through play.

Sorting involves children looking at a group of objects and sorting them in some way. Some children sort by colour, others by size or properties (such as metal, wood etc.). However your children sort this shows they have an understanding about the differences between the objects.



Children will naturally sort objects left around them but its important that they have a good collection of objects. Baskets or boxes of objects from around the house allow children to sort or commercially bought toys such as colourful cars or pencils will also work.



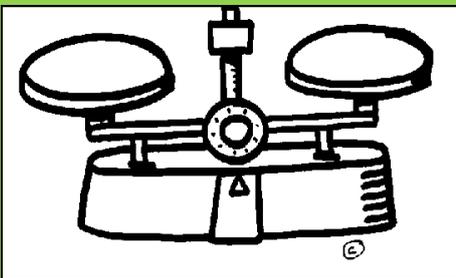
Matching simply means finding one object which is the same or similar to another when sorting. Child may match one car to another because it is identical but they could also match a car to a bus (4 wheels? Colour?). Its important to ask your child how they are the same or how they are different to one another.



Ordering can mean a few different things. One common play schema is where children line objects up. This is an excellent starting point for more mathematical ordering. Children can order objects by size, weight, height, length or in a way unique to them. The objects don't necessarily need to be similar in any way, but to the children they can be ordered.



Providing baskets and boxes of resources is extremely helpful because this puts maths in a real home context. However children can order anything around them such as teddy bears, socks, shoes, cups, cutlery, papers and magazines, food, etc. At this stage we would want children to be able to touch and handle the objects they are ordering, and of course to explain the reasons for their ordering.



Comparing is the skill which underpins all of the above three activities. Comparing requires a child to be able to pick up an object and check for similarities and differences and usually, to communicate these in some way.

However children need to have language in order to do this. This requires spending time with your child and talking through your own play. E.g. 'I have two socks, this one is pink but this one is yellow, they are different.'