

## Doing the Laundry—Sorting and Classifying

### Activities for Families

- To assist young children with the notion of sorting and classifying, set out a number of “containers” (paper plates, small baskets, plastic tubs, etc.) on the floor. Next, put a pile of mixed objects (buttons, pasta, beans, blocks, coins, etc.) on the floor next to the dividers. Finally, have your child sort the items into separate groups by placing the objects into the containers.
- Start with a pile of 4-5 objects that have only one attribute that is different (color, size, or shape). Have your child put the objects into different containers so that the objects are the same in some way. Talk with your child. Listen and accept all reasonable explanations to why objects were classified the way they are.
- In working with simple sorting, tasks selected can become more challenging by increasing the number of objects to be sorted, by having children consider more attributes, and by giving verbal versus visual clues.
- With very young children, it is best practice to show the object and ask the child to place 4-5 objects with one attribute (color, for example) in a container. As your child masters this first step, he/she can sort 6-8 objects with two attributes (color and size).
- Next, move to three different attributes (color, size, and shape). Then, move to four or more different attributes. At this stage you can have your child sort by the objects function or by items using or effecting different senses (for example, animals eat grass or animals with rough skin instead of fur).
- Give your child lots of opportunities to sort and classify objects throughout your regular day. Have your child:
  - put the silverware away and let them sort by knife, fork, and spoon.
  - put things into recycling bins and let them sort by plastic, cardboard and paper.
  - Put items in a jewelry box and let them sort by rings, earrings, and necklaces/bracelets.
  - Sort dirty clothes into piles based on their color—light, dark, and multi-colored.
  - Sort clean clothes into specific piles—pants, shirts, socks, towels, etc. OR by family members—mom, dad, brother, sister, etc.
  - String beads on a necklace or bracelet. Separate them out by color, shape, size, etc.
  - Play with stacking toys such as blocks and LEGOS
  - Play with stuffed animals by sorting them into areas at the zoo.
  - Separate beans, coins, and buttons into an egg container.
  - Cut out pictures from a magazine or newspaper in order to sort them into different categories.