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Sorting, Classifying, and Sets

Educational Objectives: The child will be able to group objects by common observable attributes (size, shape, color, pattern, position, use, etc.). He or she will be able to verbalize how the items are alike. (Classified by color, use, likes, etc.)

Vocabulary: *Sorting*—to arrange items according to a group

Classifying—to name a group according to a common bond

Set—a group of items that satisfies a given condition

Classroom Activities

1. At circle time explain that you are going to talk about sorting. Review the definitions. Work together to sort the types of shoes worn by each class member. Have each child take off one shoe and one at a time place it in front of the teacher. Point out something specific about each shoe as it is placed on the floor. Introduce sorting by demonstrating that there are a number of ways the shoes can be sorted and classified—by color, by closure (Velcro®, laces, slip on), by size, or by type (sneaker, sandal, hard sole). Suggest that the shoes need to be sorted into two groups (sets) and ask if the children have any suggestions as to how they should go about this task. After a decision has been made, bring out two hula hoops to use as visual tools to help the children understand sorting. Identify what kind of shoe should go in each hoop. One at a time, let each child retrieve his or her shoe and put it in the proper hoop. Analyze the results with the children. Use the word *set* when describing the two groups of shoes.
2. Explain to the children that they will be able to sort their snack as they eat it. Give each child a copy of Sorting Snack (page 38). Provide a snack of cereal, dried fruit, candy, and crackers. Place a handful of the snack on a napkin and let the children sort their snack as they enjoy it. Encourage discussion and ask questions as they sort.
3. Add a sorting poster to the Math Center. This can be purchased at a store or can be handmade. *Example:* A poster can show the different ways to sort foods (fruits, vegetables, milk products, meats, etc.) or types of animals (farm, zoo, pets, etc.).
4. Add commercial sorting toys to the Math Center such as vehicles, bugs, dinosaurs, etc.
5. Add sorting jars to the Math Center. Use plastic jars with different collections of items to sort. Provide a larger bin to hold two to three of these jars at a time. Demonstrate to the children how they can use mini loaf pans or muffin tins to sort the items. Model how to clean up and then sort another jar. *Examples:*

Nature Jar: walnuts, buckeyes, pinecones, acorns

Shop Jar: screws, nuts, bolts, wing nuts

Ring Jar: assorted children's plastic rings

Shell Jar: assorted small shells

Eraser Jar: assortment of juvenile erasers and pencil-end erasers

Golf Tee Jar: different colors, sizes, and materials

Bottle Cap Jar: assorted sizes, types, and colors

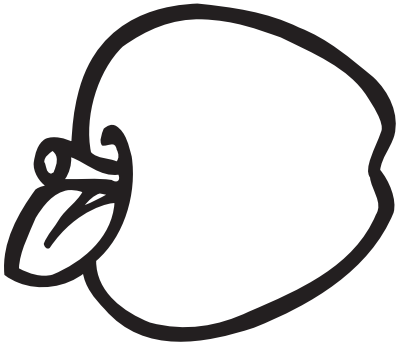
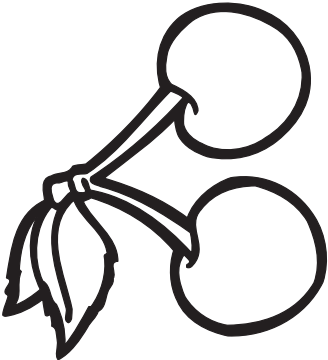
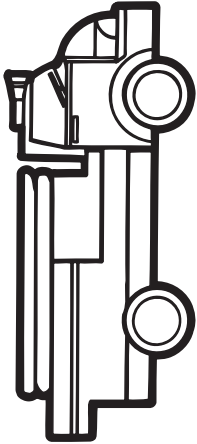
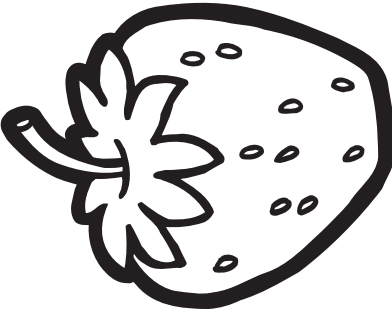
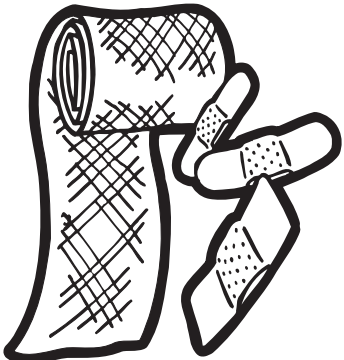
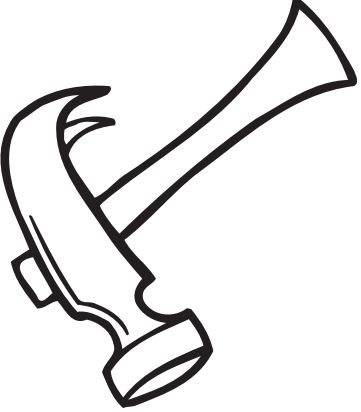


Button Jar: assorted sizes, colors, and number of holes

Paper Clip Jar: different colors, sizes, and types



6. Send home a letter (page 37) asking your children to bring in a few sorting items to contribute to the Math Center. Children tend to participate more in the Math Center if they have ownership and have contributed to it. Change sorting items on a daily or weekly basis.

What Doesn't Belong? Cards (cont.)

Use with Classroom Activity #3 and Listening Activity #2 on page 88.

What's Missing? Cards *(cont.)*

