

Matching and Sorting Shapes, Colors, and Objects

Matching

Matching is putting two objects together based on a specific feature. For example, you are matching shapes when putting a puzzle together and matching your shoes when you get ready for the day.

Sorting

Sorting is grouping a number of objects together based on similarities. For example, you are sorting when you organize the laundry or your silverware drawer.

Benefits of Matching and Sorting

- Improves fine motor skills, which is the ability to use the muscles in the hands.
- Improves visual motor skills, which is the ability to see something and respond with a motor action. For example, we use visual motor skills when we catch a ball or when we copy words from a chalkboard.
- Teaches similarities and differences between objects.
- Helps teach colors, shapes, and sizes of objects.
- Can carry over skills used later in life such as mathematic concepts and organization and control of daily life situations.

Milestones Related to Matching and Sorting Objects

- Matches objects between 15 and 19 months old
- Matches sounds to animals between 18 and 22 months old
- Matches objects to picture between 19 and 27 months old
- Sorts objects between 19 and 24 months old
- Matches sounds to pictures of animals between 22 and 24 months old
- Matches identical simple pictures of object between 27 and 30 months old
- Matches similar pictures of objects between 30 and 36 months old

Milestones Related to Matching and Sorting Colors

- Matches colors (black and white) between 26 and 29 months old
- Matches primary colors (red, yellow, blue) between 29 and 33 months old
- Starts to sort colors and point to several colors when named around 33 months old

Milestones Related to Matching and Sorting Shapes

- Matches shapes (circle, square, triangle) between 26 and 30 months old
- Sorts shapes (circle, square, triangle) between 30 and 36 months old

Home Activities to Work on Matching and Sorting

Color Sorting Containers

- Use an empty egg carton, muffin tin, ice cube tray, or any other object with multiple compartments.
- Make the compartments different colors by painting or coloring the holes or placing colored stickers, muffin papers, or small pieces of paper into the bottom.
- Use objects around the house such as colorful food (Fruit Loops, candy, fruits, veggies, marshmallows, etc.), pom poms or colored cotton balls, buttons, beads, pouch tops, bottle caps, cut up pieces of straw or pipe cleaner, broken pieces of crayons, or any other small and colorful objects in your home.
- Encourage your child to match the objects by placing them in the correct compartment of the container.
- Or do not make the compartments different colors and simply have your child sort the colors on their own.



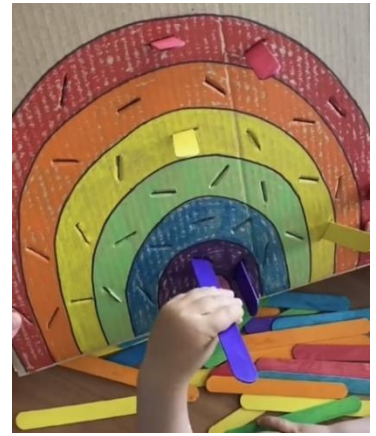
Color Sorting with Cups and Bowls

- Use colorful cups or bowls to sort different objects.
- Use objects around the house such as colorful food (Fruit Loops, candy, fruits, veggies, marshmallows, etc.), pom poms or colored cotton balls, buttons, beads, pouch tops, bottle caps, crayons, straws, pipe cleaners, or colorful popsicle sticks.
- Encourage your child to match the objects by placing them in the correct colored cup or bowl.
- Or just use any cups or bowls you have and simply have your child sort the colors on their own.



Color Sorting Rainbow Activity

- Use blank cardboard to make the base. This can be an old box or just a piece of cardboard you have in your home.
- Draw and color a rainbow on the piece of cardboard.
- Cut slits or poke small holes into the different colors of the rainbow on the cardboard.
- Use colorful items that will fit into the openings you made. This could be colored Q-tips, popsicle sticks, straws, pipe cleaners, or buttons.
- Encourage your child to match the colored items into the correct part of the rainbow.
- This is also a great fine motor activity to work on the muscles in your hand!



Color Sorting Caterpillar Activity

- Save your child's empty food pouches. Try and have a variety of colors.
- Gather an empty cardboard box and poke holes into the top.
- Place the bottom of the pouch container in the box, with the opening of the pouch poking through the top.
- Draw legs or a head on the box to make it look like a caterpillar.
- Give your child the pouch tops and have them match it to the correct color to complete the caterpillar.
- Or just give your child some empty pouches with the tops off and have them match the colors.
- This is great for learning colors and also works on fine motor skills.



Color Sorter

- Instead of a shape sorter, make your own color sorter. Here are two different ways you can make your own color sorter.
- Use an empty cardboard box and cut holes into the top. You can make the holes any size you want.
 - Color around the holes with paint, marker, crayon, or place different colored paper around the holes.
 - Use different colored objects that will fit in the holes such as balls, pom poms or colored cotton balls, buttons, beads, pouch tops, or bottle caps,
 - Have your child sort the items by placing them in the correct hole.
- Use an empty container such as a milk jug, Puffs container, Pringle can, coffee can, formula can, or anything else of a similar shape or size.
 - Poke small holes into top of the container.
 - Color around the hole with paint or marker, or place different colored paper or stickers around the holes.
 - Use different colored objects that will fit in the holes such as straws, pipe cleaners, popsicle sticks, or colored food such as Veggie Straws.
- This activity is great for learning colors and can also work on some fine motor skills as well.



Colorful Lid Sorting

- Save lids from different containers or jars. Try and save a variety of colors.
- Use an old box and cut slits into the top so that the lids can fit through.
- Color around the slits in the box using paint, marker, crayon, or place colored paper or stickers around the edges.
- Encourage your child to place the colored lids into the correct color slot of the box.
- This is also a great fine motor activity!



Color Sorting with Paper Tubes

- Save your toilet paper or paper towel tubes and cut them up. Color the tubes different colors.
- Or you can just use colored paper and roll it to make a tube.
- Set the tubes up on a flat surface.
- Gather colorful items that can fit in the tubes such as colorful food (Fruit Loops, candy, fruits, veggies, marshmallows, etc.), pom poms or colored cotton balls, buttons, beads, pouch tops, bottle caps, cut up pieces of straw or pipe cleaner, broken pieces of crayons, or any other small and colorful objects in your home.
- Have your child sort the items by placing them in the correct colored tube.



Suspended Color Sorting Activity

- Use a piece of cardboard or paper and cut holes out.
- Color around the hole with paint or marker, or place different colored paper or stickers around the holes.
- Use two paper towel rolls and cut a slit at the top.
- Insert the piece of cardboard or paper into the paper towel rolls to make a stand.
- Gather colorful items that can fit in the holes such as colorful food (Fruit Loops, candy, fruits, veggies, marshmallows, etc.), pom poms or colored cotton balls, buttons, beads, pouch tops, bottle caps, or anything else you may have.
- Encourage your child to sort the items by placing them in the correct colored tube.



Color Sorting on Paper

- Use paper as a color sorting activity.
- Try using different colored pieces of paper to place objects on.
- Or try using white paper and draw different colored circles on it or place different colored stickers on it.
- Use objects that can match the colors such as colorful food (Fruit Loops, candy, fruits, veggies, marshmallows, etc.), colorful clothes (socks or shirts rolled into a ball), pom poms or colored cotton balls, buttons, beads, pouch tops, bottle caps, or any other colorful objects in your house.
- Encourage your child to sort the items by placing them on the correct colored paper or the correct colored circle.



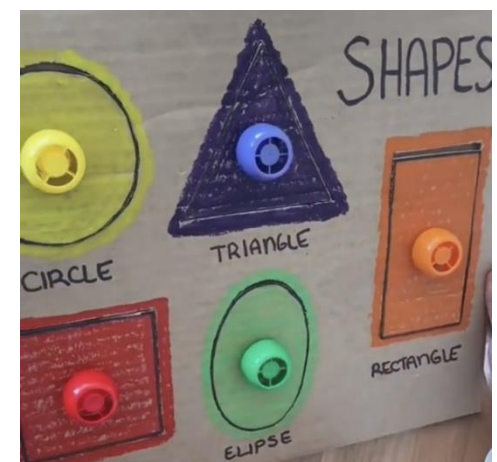
Shape Sorter

- Use a large can or container such as a Puffs container, Pringle can, coffee can, formula can, or anything of similar shape and size to make a shape sorter.
- Gather items that you can put into the container such as dried foods (cereal, pasta, puffs, beans), cotton balls, wine corks, old credit cards or IDs, bottle caps, pouch tops, pipe cleaners, Q-tips, straws, buttons, popsicle sticks, or anything else you may have at home.
- Cut different sized shapes in the top of the lid for different sized items to fit through OR just cut one shape in the lid and use several containers or different shape sorters.
- Encourage your child to place the items in the shape sorter.



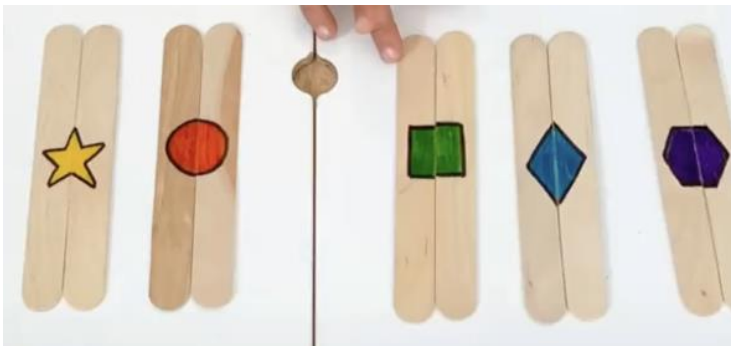
Cardboard Shapes Puzzle

- Use a piece of cardboard to make your own shape puzzle.
- Draw different shapes on the cardboard (circle, oval, rectangle, square, triangle, etc.)
- Carefully cut out the different shapes.
- For more decoration you can color the cut-out shape pieces. You can also color around the edges of the puzzle board and write the name of the shape underneath it. However, decorating it is not necessary.
- Glue a small handle on the cut-out shapes. This can be pouch tops, bottle caps, cotton balls, or anything else you may have.
- Now give this puzzle for your child to work on learning their shapes and completing puzzles.



Popsicle Sticks Shapes Puzzle

- Keep popsicle sticks to create a shapes puzzle.
- Draw half of a shape on one popsicle stick. Then draw the other half of the shape on another popsicle stick.
- You can even color the shapes to make it more colorful if you want.
- Continue doing this until you have a variety of shapes (circle, square, triangle, star, heart, diamond, hexagon, etc.)
- Give your child the popsicle sticks and have them find the matches and put them together to create the shape.



Matching Objects Game

- Gather different items from around the house. It will help if the items are flat so that they are easier to trace. Some examples are any toys, hairbrush, comb, remote control, old credit card or ID, cookie cutters, kitchen utensils (fork, spoon, mixing spoon, etc.), bottle caps, buttons, lid containers, toilet paper roll, coaster, or anything else you have!
- Place the items randomly on a large piece of paper or use multiple pieces of paper if they do not fit on one page.
- Trace the items onto the paper.
- Have your child match the items onto the correct spot on the paper.



Coin Sorting

- Take an empty box and tape coins onto the top (quarter, dime, nickel, penny).
- Cut slits into the box below each coin.
- Give your child a handful of coins and have them sort them by placing each coin in the correct slot.
- If you don't want to make the box, simply have your child separate them into different piles or have them place the coins in cups or bowls instead.



Matching Color Wheel

- Use paper or cardboard for this activity.
- Cut the paper or cardboard into a circle.
- Draw lines across your paper or cardboard to make a wheel.
- Color the sections different colors or place different colored stickers in the sections.
- Use different colored chip clips or clothespins (you can even color them yourself).
- Have your child match the chip clip or clothespin to the correct section on the wheel.
- This is also a great fine motor skill and strengthens muscles in your fingers and hands.



Play in Nature

- Take your child outside to explore nature.
- Collect different items outside such as rocks, flowers, leaves, or anything else you may find.
- Sort or match what you find. You can do this by object, color, size, or anything else you come up with.



Reminder: Please be sure to supervise children at all times during these activities, as playing with small objects can be a choking hazard!

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