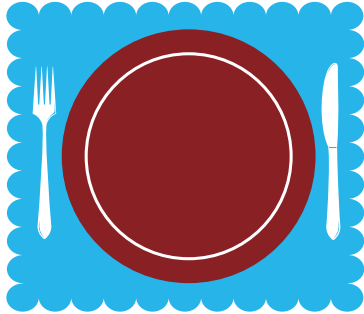


Sorting, Classifying, and Organizing

Sorting and organizing things into sets and groups is an important math skill for young children to develop. Have fun exploring your world while you practice these skills. Children can classify objects, ideas, sounds, smells, or flavors into groups of like items.

Sort during cleanup

Sort the socks, shirts, and pants during laundry time. Organize spoons, forks, and dull knives in a basket when putting away clean dishes. Decide which drawer, basket, or closet is the right place for each item.



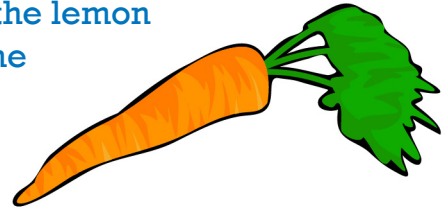
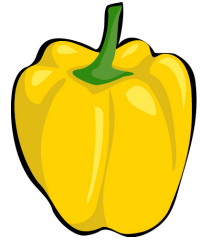
Create collections!

Children can use egg cartons or sheets of paper with two or more sections for grouping similar things. Use natural objects such as rocks, sticks, or pinecones that you find outdoors. Small objects such as coins, crayons, or stickers that you find around the house are also good for sorting.



Group foods

Talk about groups of different kinds of foods during meals. Classify food by type, color, texture, and flavor. For example, say “the corn and bell pepper are both yellow. Is the carrot yellow or a different color?” Or “The apple is sweet and the lemon is sour. Is the strawberry sweet or sour?”



Talk about attributes

Ask about the attributes of people and pets around you. Who is wearing shoes and who is wearing boots? Who has shoes with laces and who has shoes without laces? Who has gloves and who has mittens? Who has fur and who has feathers? Who has a red shirt and who has a different color shirt?



Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this tip sheet are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois State Board of Education.



13 Children's Research Center
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
51 Gerty Dr. • Champaign, IL 61820-7469
Telephone: 217-333-1386
Toll-free: 877-275-3227
E-mail: iel@illinois.edu
<https://illinoisearlylearning.org>

