



Same and Different

Did you collect anything when you were a child? Does your child collect anything? When collecting things, you need to decide what belongs in the collection and what does not. Children who create a leaf collection or a bug collection are learning how to sort leaves and insects into groups.

Putting together things that are the same is called classification. When children classify, they are using information about what is the same and what is different. Most parents already do things with their children that help the children learn about classification. This learning happens over time. At first, children classify items based on how they look, sound, and feel. Then they classify items based on their function or use.

Activities

- **Helping around the house—** Children can play “same and different” games as they clean up their toys, set the table, or do other daily activities. “Put all of the blue blocks away,” or, “Legos go in this box, and doll clothes go here.”
- **Talking about sorting—** Give children different kinds of beans, pasta, or buttons. Ask them to sort the items. Watch what the children do and comment on their sorting “rules.” For example, you might say, “Oh, I see you have the small buttons together, the medium buttons together, and the large buttons together.”

- **Magazines—** Think of three groups of people (such as men, women, children), foods (such as dessert, breads, vegetables), furniture (such as chairs, tables, beds), or other items. Ask children to find pictures from magazines that fit each of those groups. They can cut the pictures out and glue them on a page.

Collections

- **Start a collection—** Children love to collect things. Help them choose something to collect. Give them a box for their collection or find a display shelf for their things.
- **Rearrange—** Children can rearrange their collections over and over into different groups. This gives them practice thinking about same and different.

- **Yahooligans**— Look on this Web site to find many ideas about collecting stamps, insects, and coins. There are also Web sites about collecting leaves, shells, fossils, stickers, Yo-Yos, candy wrappers, and other things. http://www.yahooligans.com/Sports_and_Recreation/Hobbies/Collecting/

Why children should learn same and different

- **Saving time**— Children can save time as they learn to put things together in an organized way. They do not need to look all over if all the shoes are together or all the crayons are in the same place.
- **Being practical**— Children learn to be practical as they learn about (classify) which clothes are appropriate for the weather.
- **Staying safe**— To stay safe, children can be taught to avoid certain dangers. A can of Parmesan cheese and a house hold cleaner can look similar. Children can learn what things are safe and what things are dangerous. Mr. Yuk stickers can help.

Sources:

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Prepared by:

Jandy Jeppson
Extension Graduate Research Assistant

Judith A. Myers-Walls, Ph.D., CFLE
Extension Specialist