



Developing Play Skills

Parent/Carer Information - For children aged 2-5



Early play skills

Matching, Selecting and Naming

Exploratory play is important for learning about the properties of objects and for recognising similarities. Simple play helps your child to develop how to match objects which are similar, e.g. this ball is the same size as this size ball and does not feel/look like a toy car. Children will begin to learn matching skills by playing with actual objects/toys like wooden bricks or toys. Then there is progression to matching pictures of objects to the real thing. They will later develop skills to match objects to other pictures/drawings/symbols. In time they will learn to match colours and then develop understanding of concepts such as big, little, long and short.

The child with vision impairment may take longer to grasp these concepts as their ability to match maybe based on the use of their other senses to identify the object. Lots of opportunities to recognise similarities and differences in the early years is important so that comparisons can be made between people, objects and the wider environment.

Having learnt to match objects, children go on to selecting them, e.g. you may ask your child to pass you the bell toy which also lights up, where there is a selection of bell toys. When selecting your child has to recognise and respond to the named toy but not to actively use the toy.

The final stage is for your child to be able to name the object, picture or colour, so that when they pass the toy to you they can name the object themselves accurately.

Activities to promote matching, selecting and naming

- Start with two sets of three simple everyday objects, e.g. two spoons, two toy bricks, two plates. Place one set in front of your child and then give him the other set, one by one. Get him to place each one alongside its pair.
- Encourage your child to match shapes by using a simple shape sorter toy. Learning to put the ball in the round hole and the cube in the square hole.
- Initiate trial and error by asking your child to try different holes in a shape sorting game, so that they can learn that a ball does not fit in a square hole
- If your child can see colours you can use a variety of similar coloured toys to match. If you are not sure if your child has colour vision, try using colours to match to help identify if they can see certain colours.
- Once your child is matching successfully, ask them to select the object of your choice from a group of objects (use real household objects as this really improves their understanding of items in the home) e.g. their cup or spoon and ask them to pass the cup or spoon to you.
- As your child passes the object to you, give them lots of praise for selecting the item.
- Finally once they are selecting the items consistently and accurately, ask them to name the object.
- Your child is now ready to help sorting the objects into groups, which is really helpful when keeping items in the same place or for when you are tidying away toys together. It is beneficial for your child to help with this activity so that not only do they know where their toys are kept, but also they can organise them into groups of the same or similar items. This will help them know where they are for the next time they want to play with them.

Contact details

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Hearing and Vision Support Services are provided on behalf of Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP)

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