

DEVELOPING CONCEPT SKILLS

Learning basic concepts such as colors, sizes, shapes, and numbers helps children understand new words and ideas. It also gives children ways to tell you about what they see or want.

- **Name parts of the body** as you wash during bath time, or ask your child to point to body parts on dolls or toy animals. Even very young children learn to sing "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes" quickly.
- **Play the game "Same and Different"** using pictures from magazines, small toys and other objects, or playing cards for matching games. Start with two piles of pictures or objects and match same items or pictures (e.g., two boats, two pennies, two queens) or match objects that often go together (e.g., a shoe and sock, knife and fork, salt and pepper).
- **Practice counting** by making counting part of your daily routine. Play "Simon Says" and ask children to "Jump two times" or "Wiggle your finger four times" or "Blink one time." In the car or bus, count types of things you see through the window to teach the idea that a number stands for a certain amount. You might count cars of a certain color or model, the number of stoplights during the trip, etc.
- **Name the colors** of your child's most liked toys or shirts to help your child learn the colors he or she sees often. Household items, such as socks or books, can be sorted or arranged by colors. Try a color hunt at home and ask your child to find objects that are the color you name.
- **Compare the shapes and sizes** of common items, or make up a guessing game: "Which is bigger? A raisin or an apple?" Make a game of naming which item doesn't belong by showing your child three small items that look alike and one larger one. Ask your child to find all the objects in the house that are shaped like a circle, square, diamond, etc.
- **Memory games** are fun to play with children. Place various objects on a tray and have your child look at them for 5 seconds. Then, have your child cover his/her eyes and remove an object. Ask your child which object was removed.

Resources

Toys: Bingo and lotto games, simple card games like "Go Fish"

Many board games and digital games require memory and matching skills. Look for themes or pictures that your child may be curious about (e.g., animals, a particular cartoon character).

<http://www.minimops.com/>

This free website features games and activities for children ages 2 through 5 years.

http://www.fisher-price.com/fp.aspx?st=10&e=gameslanding&mcat=game_infant,game_toddler,game_preschool

The toy and gear manufacturer's website includes a section of online games designed for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

<http://www.sesamestreet.org/games>

With popular Sesame Street® characters, these free computer video games show children how to sort, count, put like things together, and more.

<http://pbskids.org/>

Characters including Curious George®, Sid the Science Kid™, and Clifford the Big Red Dog™ show children how to organize, count, put like things together, etc.