

Developing and using good vocabulary is essential. It lets children make sense of what is going on around them and will help them to communicate successfully. A good vocabulary is important for later learning too. Sorting words into different categories helps to develop an effective mental filing system which helps children learn and remember words and their meanings.

### "Sort it out"

#### Getting ready

Gather together a range of different items from around your setting – toys, clothes and food items. Place them into a bag or box. Divide the children into smaller groups and work with one group at a time so they can each take a turn.



#### How to play

- Tell the children that you've been having a tidy up, but you need help to sort the items out so they can be put away.
- Pull an item out (or ask the child to) and then ask "is it something we eat, or something to play with?" Get them to put it into the right pile, ready for putting away. Why not take the opportunity to chat about the words you're using "yes, you're right, gloves are clothes, and they are something we wear".
- Children benefit from repetition so it's great that they get to hear the category name several times.

Play it a different way

Make it easier: Give the child an item and say the category, so they don't have to find the category name themselves – say "find the things we play with".

Make it trickier: Try sorting the same items in a number of different ways, by colour, by weight ('heavy' or 'light'), by features (for example 'with or without wheels').