The Yes/No Sort

Players 1-4   Ages 3+   5-10 min

GOAL

To sort a collection of items into two sets (yes/no) according to one sorting attribute.

MATERIALS

Any collection of items that can be sorted into yes/no piles according to one specific attribute (a particular type, size, shape, color, texture, etc.) Examples include:
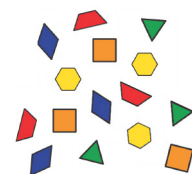
Nature Items	Clothing Items	Kitchen Items	Pattern Block Shapes

VOCABULARY

Compare

Same

Different

QUESTIONS

Can you explain the sorting rule to me?

What is another sorting rule we could use?

HOW TO PLAY

1. Choose a collection of items and place them in a pile on the table or floor.

2. Choose an attribute for children to sort the collection into yes/hno piles by. Examples:

    - Nature items: brown items, soft items (e.g., flower petal)
    - Clothing: blue items, small items (children's clothing),

sandals
- Kitchen: spoons, raisins (from a fruit or trail mix)
- Shapes: triangles, shapes with four sides

3. Show children the collection of items. For example, show a laundry basket with clothes inside. Say, "Let's sort these clothes into two piles. In one pile, put all of the clothing that is blue. In another pile, put all of the clothing that is not blue."

4. Hold up a piece of clothing from the basket. Ask, "Is this blue?"

5. Once the child responds correctly, ask, "Which pile should we put it in? The blue pile or the other colors pile?"

6. Let the child add the piece of clothing to the correct pile.

7. Have children continue to sort the clothes into the piles of blue and non-blue. Allow them to make reasonable sorting decisions as they go. For example, if a shirt has blue and yellow stripes, ask children which pile they think the shirt belongs to (e.g., "it goes in the blue pile because everything that has some blue on it will go in the blue pile").

8. Once children have finished sorting, ask comparison questions:
    "Which pile looks bigger, the blue pile or the other colors pile?"
    "The blue pile is bigger. What do you think that means? Do we wear a lot of blue clothing?"
    "How many pieces of clothing do you think are in the blue pile? Can you count and see if you are right?"

9. To extend this activity, put the clothing items back into the basket and choose a new attribute for children to sort the collection into yes/no piles by. For example: "Let's sort the clothes into two piles again. This time, let's put all of the kids' clothes in one pile and the grown-up clothes in another pile."

WHAT CHILDREN ARE LEARNING

- Many young children love to sort and organize their toys or other collections of objects around the house or in their classroom. This process of sorting, or classification, is an important

practice in science and mathematics. Activities like this help children gain experience with grouping objects by their characteristics and counting how many in each group. Later, they will use this skills when collecting and analyzing data to solve problems.

- Young children's verbal skills vary. Some will be able to verbalize their answers to comparison questions more easily than others. Allow emergent language children to respond by pointing to piles or showing numbers with their fingers.

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