

## Top tips for supporting sorting and classifying in early years

Classifying and sorting activities help children to develop a range of thinking skills and build foundations for later problem-solving.

The process of sorting and classifying involves grouping and separating objects according to similarities and differences.

Here are some top tips to support children with sorting and classification;

- **Provide real-life experience wherever possible** - children naturally like to sort and having a real purpose makes it very engaging and helps them to develop skills for life
- **Provide manipulatives for problem-solving** - manipulatives are objects that children can use, such as pine cones, to perceive a mathematical concept. The use of manipulatives provides a way for children to learn concepts through developmentally appropriate hands-on experience
- **Allow children to set their own categories** - or make their own patterns, rather than always giving sets to work with
- **Support children's confidence** - by encouraging them to talk about and explain their thinking. Value their contribution, even if their answer is wrong
- **Practice** - allow resources, time and space for lots of practice
- **Join in** - engage in problem-solving alongside children and pose open-ended questions which help to encourage their thinking and problem-solving skills.

