

Example of Classification and Sorting

Henry, a three year old, is given a box that contains red, blue, and yellow buttons. The buttons in the box also vary in size and contain differing numbers of holes (two or four). When told to sort the buttons into like groups, Henry carefully places all of the red buttons in one group, all of the blue buttons in another, and all of the yellow buttons in a third. In this case, Henry is classifying the buttons according to color, however, Henry could have classified the buttons in several other ways.

Let's take a look at the other options.

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Classification by Size

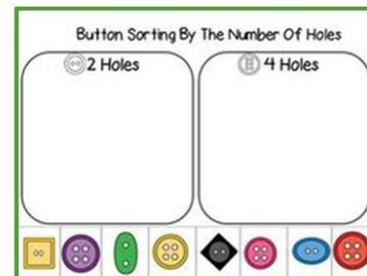
To classify the buttons by size, Henry needs to place all of the large buttons in one group and all of the small ones in another. Depending on his developmental level, he may even add a medium-sized category.



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Classification by Number of Holes

To classify the buttons based on this characteristic, Henry would need to place all of the buttons with two holes in one group and those with four in another. In order to classify the buttons this way, Henry must be able to count.



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Classification by Shape

To classify the buttons based on this fashion, Henry must choose two or more characteristics such as color and size. In this case, Henry is looking for more than one characteristic as he classifies the buttons. This skill obviously requires a higher developmental level.



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As you can see from the example, a wide variety of classification skills can be developed through the same activity.

In addition, one activity can also be altered to meet the Individual developmental needs of several children.



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Apply what you've learned!

Use this or a similar sorting activity with your class. If you work with younger children you will want to help them sort by color or size first. Older children can begin sorting by shape or number of holes just like the example with Henry.

Watch the children as they complete the activity. Are they finding new ways to sort and classify the objects? Are they noticing connections between the groups?