

Matching activities

Supporting reading development

Benefits

- Learning matching skills in pre-school will support children to match letters and sounds in Reception class.
- Being able to match items and explain why they go together is important for cognitive skills and ability.
- By matching objects to pictures children are practising visual discrimination, becoming familiar with one dimensional print and learning to connect real objects to print. All of which are important pre-reading skills.
- Matching games improve language, concentration and memory. Research has shown a link between dyslexia and working memory. To learn new words we have to remember each sound segment, put them together and remember what they look like for future use. To be able to do this, you need a good working memory.
- Matching skills are involved in visual discrimination. Children use matching skills to tell whether two words or letters are the same or different. Learning to match shapes and patterns helps children as they learn to recognise letters and then words.

Adult role

- You can help children develop matching skills by using print in your setting's environment. Children can look to see whether they can find another example of a word or letter in the print around them. This will not only reinforce matching skills but also make children more aware of the print around them.
- Provide a range of activities that encourage children to match objects, pictures, sounds and words.
- Make sure that activities are at the right level for the children and give them time to process information.
- Provide quiet areas where children can engage in these activities without noise distractions.
- Use large print books when reading with children and point to the words as you read.
- Label resources with pictures and words.

Useful links

- Teaching ideas www.teachingideas.co.uk
- Matching, sorting and pairing activities for young children www.earlylearninghq.org.uk