

Family Activities



School Readiness Skill: Notices similarities and differences

A child's ability to recognize and identify similarities and differences among people or objects is an important foundation for the more abstract concepts of mathematics.

One of These Things is not Like the Other Game

An inexpensive way to teach the concepts of alike and different is to use objects you may find around the home.

Laundry: Select an article of clothing such as socks. Choose 4 socks that are the same in every aspect: color, size, and pattern, etc. and line them up in a row on a hard surface such as a table in front of your child. Select one more sock that is different from the 4 other socks you have chosen and place it next to the row you've created. Invite your child to find the sock that is different among the group by stating: "One of these socks is not like the others, can you find which sock?" Allow your child time to choose the correct sock and praise him or her for a job well done – "Yes, this sock is not like the others. It is different." "Can you tell me how this sock is different from the others?" Repeat this activity with other combinations of socks or other articles of clothing until he or she becomes comfortable with this task.



Loose Change: Take out a hand full of coins and arrange 5 pennies in a row on a table in front of your child. Now place one dime next to the row of pennies you've created. Invite your child to find the coin that is different among the group by stating: "One of these coins is not like the others, can you find which coin?" Allow your child time to choose the correct coin and praise him or her for a job well done – "Yes, this coin is not like the others. It is different." Repeat this activity with other combinations of coins until he or she becomes comfortable with this task.



Utensils: Arrange a row of like kitchen utensils such as forks on a table. Select another utensil such as a spoon alongside the row of forks you've created. Invite your child to find the utensil that is different among the group by stating: "One of these utensils is not like the others, can you find which one?" Allow your child time to choose the correct utensil and give praise for a job well done- "Yes, this one is not like the others. It is different." Repeat this activity with other utensils until he or she becomes comfortable with this task.



Letters and Numbers: Once your child has plenty of opportunities to practice the same and different activity above you can move on to more abstract objects such as letters and numbers. Arrange a row of like alphabet cards such as the letter “C” in front of your child on a table. Select a different letter such as “P” and place it next to the row of Cs you’ve created. Invite your child to find the alphabet letter that is different among the group by stating: “One of these letters is not like the others, can you find which letter?” Allow your child time to choose the correct letter card and praise him or her for a job well done- “Yes, this letter is not like the others. It is different.” Repeat this activity with other alphabet or number cards. A printable containing alphabet and numbers is provided on this website for your convenience.

C C P C



Check out the list below for some great children’s books that teach the concept of same and different. Many of these books are available at your local public library.

Same Same by Marthe Jocelyn

Sorting by Henry Pluckrose

More, Fewer, Less by Tana Hoban

Shape Up Curvy Snake by Babs Hajdusiewicz

Color Farm by Lois Ehlert