

ACTIVITY 4

Sorting Challenge

**INTENT:**

Participants practice sorting and learn sorting vocabulary.

OUTCOMES:

Participants sort earth materials and discuss the criteria used for sorting, use the DRDP sorting measure to examine the continuum of sorting, and discuss how to enable children to move along the sorting continuum.

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

- Sorting tray (dip tray)
- Variety of earth materials (e.g., sea shells, sea glass, dirt, sand, pebbles, feathers, manmade beads, sticks, acorns, river rocks, clay, leaves, lava rocks)
- Group mates
- Table Material: DRDP-K COG: MATH 1: Classification
- Handout 7: Creating Invitations through the Daily Routine



TIME: 20 minutes

PROCESS:**PART 1 (Sort):**

- Point out the sorting materials at the center of the table. (They may have already explored these during the scavenger hunt.)
- Say to participants, “We are going to exercise our sorting skills and practice sorting in as many different ways as possible.”
- Each person in the table group will get a chance to sort the materials in any way they choose. The person who most recently visited a national park will sort first.
- The materials can be used in any combination. It is not necessary to use all of the materials.
- After the first sorter is satisfied with their sorting, he/she explains his/her sorting criteria to the group. It’s also fine to discuss the criteria as the sorting occurs. (This is not a guessing game.)
- The group mate to the right of the first sorter will now take a turn sorting the materials. Again any criteria may be used—as long as it is different from any previously used method. And again, the sorter explains his/her sorting criteria. Then the group mate to the sorter’s right takes a turn.
- The sorting challenge continues until the group cannot think of any more ways to sort the materials, or until the trainer sees the energy declining and decides to move on (5-8 min).
- Sorting examples:
 - Smooth vs. bumpy
 - Light vs. dark
 - Opaque vs. clear
 - Once alive vs. never alive
 - Bumpy and triangular vs. smooth and circular
 - Bumpy and big vs. bumpy and small

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- While participants complete this challenge, trainers should walk around and make notes on how participants are sorting and the great vocabulary used.
- Bring participants back together by reviewing some of the interesting sorting criteria observed and vocabulary heard.

PART 2 (Connection to DRDP-K (2015)):

- Show the following slide with the Cognition, Including Math and Science measures.
- Ask participants to imagine we were all children and they were the teacher who had just watched this challenge. Which of the measures would they have potentially gathered evidence for? Classification is obvious—what others?
- We will now look closer at the sorting continuum by using Table Material: DRDP-K COG: MATH 1: Classification.
- Participants address the following question with their group:
 - Which developmental level did you exemplify as a group during today's sorting challenge?
 - **NOTE:** Some groups may have sorted by only one criterion and therefore not reached the highest developmental level.
- Direct participants to have a discussion and document their findings.
- Bring group back together and have a class discussion.

PART 3 (Reflecting):

- What types of opportunities do you need to provide for children in order for them to move through this continuum?
 - Potential responses:
 - Time to explore
 - Materials that are diverse enough to allow for unique sorting criteria
 - Models for using unique sorting criteria
- What does this mean for you as a teacher when planning opportunities in the physical environment of your classroom?
 - Potential responses:
 - Choose materials intentionally
 - Allow for experiences with the materials before putting them out for sorting
 - Ensure materials differ visually and tactically
- Find Handout 7: Creating Invitations in the Daily Routine. What opportunities does your classroom provide now? What new ideas do you have to add?