

# Developing an understanding of maths

## 1. Understanding that things can belong in different groups (categorising)

From a young age, children begin to realise that some things ‘go together’. They recognise that although objects may be different, they can find some similarities that group them. Examples include...

- Cats and dogs and birds
- Socks in one drawer, shirts in another
- Some food in the fridge, other food in the cupboard
- Colours or shapes
- Toys of different sizes (mummy animals and baby animals)



Packing away, sorting and matching items, using ‘describing’ words and playing with a variety of objects and toys will help children to develop this understanding.

## 2. Understanding that things in the world sometimes have a special order or pattern (sequencing)

Many events, objects and actions in the world only really work out if they happen in the right order. As children get older, they become more aware of these sequences. Some of these sequences help children to understand concepts such as size and time. Examples include...

- Breakfast, lunch, dinner
- Get out of bed, get dressed, go out
- Peel the banana then eat it!
- I’m four, you’re five (you’re bigger than me!)
- Big, middle-sized, little (for example, in the Goldilocks story)
- Mrs Rottneest’s house, then Gia’s house and then our house

Numbers are the same. They follow a sequence and all live ‘next door’ to each other in a special order.

Playing with different sized containers and toys, bead threading, stories such as ‘Goldilocks and the Three Bears,’ and keeping a height chart are all ways that children can develop this understanding.