

Play is the key way children learn about themselves, others and the world they live in. It is essential to their learning, development, health, and physical, mental and social well-being – and it's FUN! Play provides the building blocks to be ready for school.



## Sorting Games

Matching games help your baby learn visual similarities and differences between objects.

### Did you know?

Matching and fitting shapes into their correct places helps your baby's eye-hand coordination, visual perception, and develops the cognitive skill of matching.

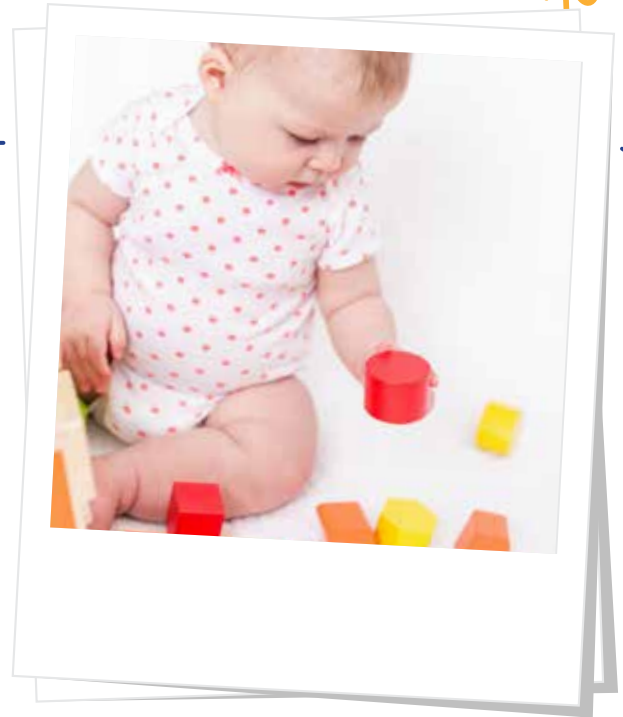
Circles are the first shape to match because they have no corners to figure out. The square, then the triangle follow in level of difficulty.

### Add language

Let your child lead and observe what they are focused on or trying to do. Lean forward expectantly and pause to give your baby a chance to start an interaction. They may look at you, make a noise or hold out a piece as a way of asking for help. You can respond by adding the words as you help a little. Then pause again to give them a chance for another turn. This helps build your baby's communication skills before they start talking in words themselves.

### Other development

Shape toys not only help to develop visual perception skills e.g. position in space, but also develop the essential skills of grasp and controlled release. Choose shape toys that match your baby's stage of learning, attention level and



grasping abilities. Start with toys with chunky parts which only have a few pieces to match. Sometimes it takes months of practice. You can demonstrate how to take pieces in and out.

### Variations

Shape sorters that make noises when the correct shape is inserted can be a fun and rewarding way of matching objects.

### Safety

Be sure shape toys do not have small parts that could be a choking hazard.

- Playgroup WA has a treasure trove of play activities for babies, toddlers and 3-5 year olds, for home and playgroup. These play activities cover a balanced diet of play across sensory, movement, language and thinking skill areas.

You can find them at [www.playgroupwa.com.au/playideas](http://www.playgroupwa.com.au/playideas) or visit [www.facebook.com/playgroupwa](https://www.facebook.com/playgroupwa)

