Matching Socks and Mittens Ideas



A fun and engaging matching and posting game. Great for sorting, counting, describing patterns, colours or shapes and learning about right and left orientation. There are many ways to use the socks and mittens. Here are a few of our ideas to get you started. We hope you enjoy them.

Interaction and Communication

Set out the socks and mittens for discussion and identification. Give the children time to explore the socks and mittens. Ask questions such as, What do you notice? Are they all the same? If not, what is different? As the children observe they will notice different patterns, colours, shapes and sizes. Encourage them to describe what they see and use mathematical vocabulary, such as right/left, biggest/smallest.

Schematic Interests

Schemas are a natural part of how young children learn. They are patterns of repeated actions or behaviours that help children test ideas, make sense of the world and build a deeper understanding through play. Younger children may enjoy posting the socks and mittens into the box. Some may like to line them up in different ways such as from the largest to the smallest. Others moving them around to match colours and patterns. By recognising schemas, we can offer resources that match children's interests and thinking, support curiosity, problem solving and confident explorations.

Finding Pairs

Lay out the socks and mittens and encourage the children to find pairs by matching the colours, stripes, spots. Add a mystery bag where they pull out one of the socks or mittens from the bag and then search for its pair to match. You could create your own printables by using the wooden socks and mittens as templates to make your own cut outs then print and laminate them for many classroom/home activities such as Snap or Memory games.

Counting and Sorting

Count the socks and mittens and introduce the concept of pairs, doubles and counting in twos. In pairs each count the number of spots or lines on the socks and mittens and match to a number card. See if your partner has the same number as you. Find ways to check and find out. Sort the items in different ways, can you guess the criteria used to sort the items each time. Provide baskets or hoops labelled with colours, patterns or sizes. Get the children to sort the socks and mittens into the correct category. Mix in odd ones to encourage problem-solving and discussion.

Fine Motor Activity

Set up a mini clothesline with pegs. Get the children to match the pairs and peg them onto the line. Pegging the socks and mittens will help to strengthen fingers and improve hand/eye coordination.

Right or left?

Use the sock and mitten pairs to teach the difference between right and left. Show that the left makes an L for left. Sing songs such as The Hokey Cokey- 'You put your left hand in, left hand out, in out in out and shake it all about. You do the Hokey Cokey and you turn around, that's what it's all about.' Play games to build confidence and identify right and left.

Exploring Patterns

Look at the different patterns on the socks and mittens. Talk about symmetry and look at other things that show symmetrical patterns. For example, butterflies, leaves, ladybirds. Use each individual sock or mitten to copy the symmetrical patterns. Draw around the items and encourage the children to be creative and create their own patterns and designs.

Invent Games

There are many games you can invent using the socks and mittens. For example, Guess the sock/mitten not to post in the box?

- One person chooses a sock or mitten and secretly records what it is.
- The other person asks questions that require yes or no answers to be able to eliminate socks and mittens and post them in the box. When they only have one left, they can finally guess the mystery sock or mitten. Will they get it right? The questions might include asking if the mystery item is a sock, whether it is worn on the right foot, etc.