

# BEAR'S BEEN SHOPPING.

When children learn words in groups that are linked, the information can be stored in a more organised way. It's a bit like having a tidy cupboard: When everything is in the right place, it's much easier to find what you need later.

By sorting words into categories, children start to:

- See the connections between words (e.g. food is for eating and clothes are for wearing).
- Understand similarities and differences (e.g. a hat and a jumper are both clothes, but they go on different parts of the body).

So, while your child is having fun sorting and playing, they're also doing something really important for their language development.



## EQUIPMENT

You will need:

- A large bag or pillowcase
- A mix of toy or real items from around the house – some food-related (e.g., apple, crisps, cereal box) and some clothing (e.g., hat, sock, jumper)
- A teddy or toy character

## OTHER WAYS TO PLAY

There are lots of opportunities to sort early objects by category. Food, clothes, vehicles (things that go) animals are all good categories to start with. You can do this by:

\*Having something that does not belong in a group of toys. E.g.

Setting up a farm but taking out a banana and saying "That's not an animal"

\*Setting up a road of books and labelling all of the vehicles but having a fish in the bag that 'does not have wheels.'

\*Going on a Autumn / spring walk and finding 'outside' things and then comparing these to 'inside' things.

\*Taking animals in the bath and talking about animals that do/do not swim.

## HOW TO PLAY

Tell your child:

"Teddy has been shopping! But teddy mixed up the food and clothes – can you help sort them out?"

Explain that there are two groups:

- Food 🥕 and Clothes 👕
- Take one item out of the bag at a time and show it to your child. Say, this is a.... (and leave a space to see if they can name it). If your child names it correctly, praise them and add extra information: "Yes, it's a hat! We wear hats on our head.". If your child doesn't know, say the word clearly and clap out the syllables together. E.g. "This is a jumper. Let's say it together – jum-per."

4 Next, ask:

"Do we think this food or clothes?"

- If they answer correctly, praise again and place the item in the right pile. If they're unsure or incorrect, gently guide them to the right choice: "That's okay – a hat is something we wear, so it goes with the clothes!"

• Keep the piles spaced apart on the floor so your child can clearly see the two categories.