Categorisation

Categorisation is critically important, because it reduces demands on memory and allows individuals to focus on important aspects of objects while ignoring irrelevant details. It also allows students to learn language. Often students with autism don't develop this skill naturally and need to be taught it explicitly. Here are some activities that can be done at home to help students practice categorisation.

Clothing ideas Put all the socks in one basket and all the t-shirts in another Sort clothes by colour Pairing socks – add in some fine motor work by having your child peg pairs together on a clothes line.	
Kitchen ideas Sort cutlery Sort Tupperware by size Sorting tins of food by type or size Sorting pasta by shape Things you can eat vs things you can't	
Toys Sort lego by size or colour Sort animals into farm animals or jungle animals Sort toys that are hard and toys that are soft into two laundry baskets Vehicles vs non vehicles.	

When choosing items to categorise consider the following;

- ✓ Safety first!
- ✓ Start simple – just two categories.

  When the student has mastered that you can increase the number of categories – e.g. sort Lego into 3 or 4 different colours.
- ✓ Categorising by two attributes e.g. colour and size.
- ✓ Categorising by appearance – e.g. colour, size
- ✓ Categorising by texture – e.g. hard and soft, rough and smooth, dry or wet
- ✓ Categorising by function – e.g. things you wear, things you eat, things you play with etc.

Games to play to support categorisation skills;

- ❖ Use printed images; Find the odd one out/which ones doesn't belong? – e.g. an elephant, a horse, a pig and a car.
- ❖ Scavenger hunt – Can you find something that's green etc.
- ❖ Speed Sorting Challenge- against others or a timer.