



BUTTON SORT TRAYS

Materials you need:

- Ice cube trays, dip trays, mini muffin tins or similar
- A collection of different coloured, textured, shaped and sized buttons (ask families for help to build your collection or scour the op/thrift shops) presented in different boxes, trays and jars.
- Plastic tweezers (if you have them, not essential)
- Teaspoons

Setup for play:

- Add the trays/jars/containers of buttons to a table along with the ice cube trays, tweezers and spoons.
- Make sure you have enough trays and containers of buttons for all children to easily access. Let them sort through the button collection then pick out their selections using the tweezers, a spoon or fingers.
- You can add some numbers or colours to the ice cube trays to initiate the sorting or you can just leave it to the children to group the buttons as they wish.

What are they learning with this activity?

As they choose and sort the buttons they are learning to:

- Classify, sort by category and group items together by similarities, patterns and differences
- Use hand/eye coordination skills and concentration
- Manipulate small objects using pincer movements
- Strengthen fine motor muscles, visual motor integration and control

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- Express themselves creatively while investigating and experimenting
- Problem solve and make decisions
- Create with different mediums and textures
- Make decisions about the materials they want to use and what works best.
- Work independently on a project
- Recognise basic colour, shape and number concepts
- Use descriptive language to describe textures, materials and actions.

Extending the play:

- Use other interesting small items to sort with. Try coloured paperclips, seeds, washers, nuts and bolts, beads, coloured pasta pieces, pebbles.
- Work together with the children to sort the buttons by the number of holes they have as an extra challenge.

