

What's This For? : 24-36 months

Naming objects by use or function helps your child:

- Learn to answer questions
- Increase his vocabulary
- Increase his awareness of how words go together

Ideas to try with your child:

- Ask your child questions such as: "What do we use to drink water?" "What do you wear to bed?" "What do you use to watch cartoons?" You want your child to name items by use not just point or get the item.
- Ask about everyday items: shoes, towels, the TV, computer, cell phones, and blankets: "What do we need to wear outside?" or "What do we use to dry off after a bath?"

If your child is struggling:

- If your child is not answering the questions, have the objects nearby to show your child. For example, if you ask "What do you use to drink?" Show him a cup.
- Give your child a choice of two items to prompt his thinking ("What do you use to eat soup?" You say, "A spoon or a table?")
- When going outside give your child two choices: "Should you get your shoes or a book?"

Going further:

- Have your child name items from every day routines, such as what we need to take a bath or what we need to start the car.
- Have your child tell you what the item is for: (What do we do with a cup?" or "What do you use to call grandma?")
- When doing an activity such as coloring give your child paper but no crayons and ask them, "What do you need to color?"
- When eating lunch or dinner give your child his macaroni and cheese but no fork, and ask, "What do you need to eat macaroni and cheese?"

The WA State Department of Early Learning and the Richland School District believes that parents, families, and caregivers are young children's best teachers. This resource guide, part of *Strong Foundations for School: Resource Guides for Parents of Young Children*, highlights a key developmental skill for **children ages 24-36 months** that parents can help improve at home.



Adapted from *WA State Early Learning and Development Guidelines, 2012*: "Point to and name objects when told their use ("What do you drink with?") *Communicating (Literacy)*, Ages-16-36 months, pg. 48