



# Washing Line

Sorting and describing  
Counting reliably



**Children often enjoy** washing dolls' clothes and hanging them up to dry.

**Adults could** provoke children's thinking by suggesting appropriate challenges when the washing is done and a drying area is available.

## The Activity

Set up a washing line for a group of children who have washed the clothes and provide simple clothes pegs so they can sort/order the items as they put them on the line.

## Encouraging mathematical thinking and reasoning:

### Describing

Tell me about the things you've got on the line already.  
Where do you think this next one should go?

### Reasoning

Have we got room for any more?  
Have we got enough pegs?  
How many clothes do we have altogether?

### Opening out

The clothes can have numbers pinned to them so challenges can be created regarding the placing of them on a line. You could have two or three washing lines with different 'rules' according to the numbers that are placed on the clothes, for example odds, evens, in order, totals etc.

### Recording

How can you show where the clothes are using paper/plasticine ...?  
What would you like to take a photograph of?

# The Mathematical Journey

## Counting

- saying one number for each object
- remembering the pattern of the number sequence
- understanding cardinality i.e. that the last number gives the total
- conservation of number through spacing out the clothes on the line and finding the total number remains the same

## Same and different

- developing the use of language to compare and contrast items of clothing with each other e.g. bigger, smaller, longer, shorter, larger ...

## Position and spatial properties

- using positional language to describe the placing of clothing on the line e.g. 'next to'

## Development and Variation

Many of these activities could be carried out without the need for washing by having pictures of clothing laminated onto card.

Having socks on the line gives opportunities for pairing and sequences.

Once the clothes have dried, children will enjoy taking them off the line and dressing the dolls again. This could provide further opportunities for sorting and matching.



## Resources

Dolls'/toys' clothes

Washing line/s and clothes pegs

A camera may be useful for taking photographs

