

Fun With Math: Shapes

Math is all around us, and your toddler has been developing math ideas and skills from the moment they were born.

We use math language—early math talk—every day around our young ones, often without noticing. Research has shown that this matters. Laying a strong foundation in math concepts makes it easier for your child to grasp more difficult concepts later.



Math Talk

Math Talk is “simply talking to your child about the math that they experience” (naec.org). For example, when you take a walk and count the trees on your block (“Let’s count the trees! I see one, oh, here is another, that’s two, and another one, that’s three”) or when you sort clothes (“This t-shirt is little, that’s yours, this one is bigger, it’s mine”) you are using math language. We know that children learn best through joyful, playful activities in the context of a loving relationship, so you can help them build a foundation for learning math skills and concepts.

Let’s Explore Shapes

Everything around us has a **shape**. Even infants notice differences between objects. Toddlers can easily distinguish between things that are the *same* or *different* when shown both flat and 3D shapes. They know that a ball and a book are distinct shapes, for example, even before they are able to articulate why and how. Understanding shapes helps your little one make sense of the world around them and even helps foster pre-reading skills.

Activities

Go on a shape scavenger hunt

Take a look around you, inside or outside. Describe the shapes you see and compare them to the foam shapes in your bag. This is a fun opportunity to use math words such as numbers, sides, round, square, rectangle, or triangle.



Explore the difference between the two dimensional and three dimensional shapes

Find paint, paper, sponges, playdough, and geometric beads of different shapes.



Look at your beads. Can you describe them? Do you have a cube, a sphere, or maybe a pyramid?

Let's print: pour a bit of paint on a sponge and press your beads on it to create a print on your paper. What shape did your pyramid come out as? Maybe you can print a pattern.



Other items you might have around that make fun objects to print with: large buttons, plastic forks, duplos, plastic lids, or cardboard tubes.

Play Squash It

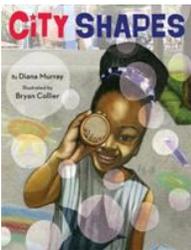
Help your little one make a ball, a snake, or other shapes with play dough. Talk together about what it will look like when you squash a shape flat. Describe the resulting shape.



Math Language

Here some more math words to get you started: circle, square, rectangle, triangle, flat, solid, sphere, cube, angle, pyramid, cone

Let's Read



City Shapes by Diana Murray

A young girl walks through the bustling city, while a pigeon flies above, both spotting hidden shapes at every turn.