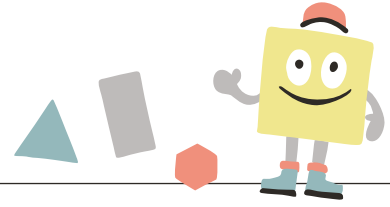


# LET'S TALK ABOUT MATH

## EVERYDAY FUN WITH SHAPES



Research finds that having a strong foundation in early math can lead to higher achievement in both math and reading later in school. Starting from birth, young children benefit from exploring shapes using their senses. Later, they combine shapes and objects of different sizes, like making a block tower or art collage. **Understanding shapes** is one of the early math concepts that children develop from birth to age five by exploring:

- Shape characteristics—noticing what makes each shape different, like knowing that a triangle has 3 straight sides and 3 angles.
- Matching—recognizing common elements of shapes and matching pairs (circles, triangles, and squares).
- Positioning shapes—understanding how shapes fit together and can be combined, like putting together a puzzle.

It's fun and easy to help your child learn these important concepts. Whether you're at home, outside or at the grocery store, simply describe the shape and position of objects as you go about your day together.

## HAVE FUN WITH MATH: PLAYFUL PARENT-CHILD SHAPE ACTIVITIES

### 0-12 MONTHS

Hold an orange in your hand and say, "An orange is round and smooth." Hold a dish towel and say, "A dish towel is a square and feels soft." Encourage your baby to explore these objects using her hands and, when safe, her mouth (like sucking on a rattle).

### 12- 24 MONTHS

Explore shapes by rolling a ball back and forth, stacking flat objects on top of one another, or putting small objects inside a box or bucket. Narrate the activity using "shape words" such as "The ball is round and rolls," "The newspapers are flat and make a neat stack," and "This piece fits into the cup because it's smaller."

### 24-36 MONTHS

Have a "shape snack" with your toddler. Offer a square (or rectangle) cracker. Cut a grape in half to show your child its round shape. Cut a piece of cheese into a triangle. Talk about and trace each shape with your finger before you eat it. Ask your child, "Would you like your sandwich cut in four triangles or four squares?"

### 3-5 YEARS

Go on a shape hunt. Shapes are all around us so have fun looking for shapes and talk about them. "The window is a rectangle. Look, it has 4 sides and 4 corners. Let's see how many rectangles we can find." Or, "The mirror is shaped like an oval." It's fun to make shapes too. Using a stick, draw a shape in sand or dirt while at the park. See if your preschooler would like to try. You can also "paint" shapes on the sidewalk or driveway using a paintbrush and water. Practice making BIG circles and then little ones, BIG squares and little ones, etc.

YOU CAN FIND MORE TIPS LIKE THESE—AS WELL AS VIDEOS, INFORMATION, AND MORE—AT  
[TOOSMALL.ORG/LETS-TALK-ABOUT-MATH](http://TOOSMALL.ORG/LETS-TALK-ABOUT-MATH) OR [ZEROTOTHREE.ORG/EARLYMATH](http://ZEROTOTHREE.ORG/EARLYMATH).



TALKING IS TEACHING

