



Seeing Patterns

Patterns are all around us! Point out patterns in your home, outside, at the library, in the store. Recognizing and copying patterns help your child “use math” without even realizing it. Children learn best when they are interested and excited about what they are doing. You can help! Try these suggestions.

INFANT:

- Sing and play patty cake. Hold your baby’s hands as you do the motions of the song. With repetition, your baby will begin to act out the song on his/her own.
- Introduce the game “SO BIG” to your baby. Ask the question, “How big is my baby? Lift your baby’s arms over his head and answer “So big!” With repetition, your baby will begin to answer the question on her own by raising her arms after hearing the question.

TODDLER:

- Make a pattern book with your child. Staple together some white paper to make a book. Glue in pictures from magazines or foam shapes to create simple patterns. For example, flower, bee, flower, bee. Or, red circle, green square, red circle, green square.
- Make a Pattern Party Snack with your toddler. Set up a pattern on your child’s plate: apple slice, banana slice, apple slice, banana slice, apple slice, banana slice. Let your child eat his “Pattern Party Snack.”

PRESCHOOLERS:

- Make Music Patterns. Use any instrument to make a music pattern: loud, soft, soft, soft, loud, soft, soft, soft. Have your child repeat the pattern.
- Do a Pattern Dance. Use your movements to make some dance patterns together. For example: hop, wiggle, spin, hop, wiggle, spin. Once your child is able to do the pattern, add other movements: claps, snaps, jumps, flaps, or shakes.
- Look for patterns in your home (on the rug, on the wallpaper, on the furniture), on clothes (striped or plaid shirt), and outside (trees, flowers). Look for anything that repeats. Describe the pattern for your child: “It has blue stripes followed by white space and then another blue stripe...”
- Make footprint patterns in the snow, mud, sand. Have your child make a print and then you make a print. Ask your child to read the pattern, “my print, mommy’s print, my print, mommy’s print, my print, mommy’s print.”