



Discovering Color, Pattern, Shape & Texture

Color, line, pattern, shape and texture play an important role in art. Artists use these elements to change the look or feel of artwork. By helping your child notice and talk about these elements you are strengthening her art skills. You are also building math and science skills that are needed to do well in school. There are lots of ways infants, toddlers, and preschoolers can build their art skills. Try these activities:

INFANT:

- Help your infant explore texture. Read "touch and feel books," such as *Pat the Bunny*.
- Describe how things feel (the blanket is soft, the jeans are scratchy, the dog is furry, the blocks are hard and smooth), and let your infant touch the things you are talking about.
- Let your baby play with safe objects of different shapes, colors and sizes.

TODDLER:

- Help your child to learn and recognize basic shapes, such as a circle, square, rectangle, and triangle. Point to different shapes around the house, such as windows, doors, tables, etc., and ask: "What shape is this?"
- Talk with your child about the colors, textures, and shapes you see around you: a smooth, orange, a square of cheese; a fragile, white, oval egg; a pear-shaped light bulb; a rough, square; a blue table cloth. Ask your older child to describe the color's *intensity* or strength (bright/dull) and the *value* (light/ dark).
- Make footprint patterns (a pattern is something that repeats in a specific order) in the snow, mud, or sand. Have your child make a print and then you make a print. Ask her to read the pattern, "my print, mommy's print, my print, mommy's print."
- Draw different lines on a piece of paper: THIN, THICK, LONG, SHORT, STRAIGHT, CURVED, LOOP and ZIG-ZAG. Have your child describe each of the lines. Then, have him cut along the lines with scissors.

PRESCHOOLERS:

- 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, circle, square, circle, square.
- Stamping Fun. Cut fruits or vegetables (lemons, apples, potatoes, etc.) in half and have your child dip it (cut side down) into paint and stamp on a piece of paper. Help her try to create different patterns.
- Make a color collage. Mix white glue with water in a small bowl. Have your child cut colored tissue paper into pieces of different shapes and sizes. Then, ask her to use a paintbrush to brush the glue mixture onto the tissue pieces and place them on a piece of paper. Show him how to overlap the pieces of tissue paper to create new colors. For example, place yellow over blue to make green, light blue over red to make purple, etc.

Book Suggestion

The Day the Crayons Quit by Drew Daywalt

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