

Shapes and Beginning Geometry

Some parents may think of geometry as an advanced math concept learned in high school, however, even young children are aware of basic concepts related to shapes. Understanding **shapes** is fundamental to understanding geometry. As children start to identify shapes, they develop a beginning understanding of geometry.

Most preschool children are beginning to learn the names of basic two-dimensional shapes, such as circle, square, triangle and rectangle. Some preschoolers can even learn to recognize and name more complex shapes (rhombus, trapezoid or hexagon) and three-dimensional shapes (cube, sphere and pyramid).

Ideas to try

Shape Pictures: Give children pieces of colorful paper cut into basic shapes — circles, squares, triangles and rectangles. Let them glue the various shapes onto a piece of paper to create their own shape picture.

Shape Puzzles: Glue a picture from a magazine to a piece of thin cardboard. Cut various shapes (circles, triangles and squares) out of the cardboard picture. Have children find the correct shaped pieces to complete the picture.



Block Play: Playing with blocks is a great way to reinforce children's knowledge of shapes. As you build a structure together, encourage children to add a specific shape. You might say, "The top of this column looks like a great place to add a half-circle. What do you think?"

Fishing for Shapes: Cut construction paper or thin cardboard into circles, squares and triangles. Attach a paper clip to each shape. Tie a magnet to the end of a 25-inch-long piece of string. Tie the other end of the string to the dowel. Spread the shapes on the floor and have children use the magnet fishing pole to "catch" them. Have them tell you what shape they caught. If this activity is difficult for younger children, you can have them place the magnet directly on the shape with their hands.

Shape Walk: Take a walk with your children and have them look for things that have common shapes, such as wheels (circle), yield sign (triangle) and windows (square). Keep track of the number of each shape found on a sheet of paper.

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