

Fun With Math: Patterns

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 every day, often without noticing. Research has shown that this matters. Laying a strong foundation with **early math talk** makes it easier for your child to grasp more difficult concepts later.



Math Talk

Math talk grows with your child. It is *simply talking to your child about the math that they experience* (naeyc.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”).

We know that children learn best through joyful, playful activities in the context of a loving relationship.

Let’s Explore Patterns

Making **patterns** is the ability to put objects, colors, sounds, or actions in a repeating order (zerotothree.org). We find patterns all around us, from the clothes we wear to daily routines, from songs we sing together to the leaves on the trees in the park. Discovering and playing with patterns fosters the idea that math makes sense.



Activities

Talk about the patterns all around you: "Look, there are stripes on your shirt, blue, white, blue, white." "Yesterday it was sunny, today it's cloudy, if it's sunny again tomorrow, that'll be a pattern."

Find items of different shapes and colors.

Describe them together. What shapes are they, what color?

Now start a simple repeating pattern with shapes of the same color,

for example: star, heart, star, heart



What should come next to make this sequence a pattern?

As this pattern becomes easier, try something a bit more complex: blue elephant, green circle, blue elephant, green circle

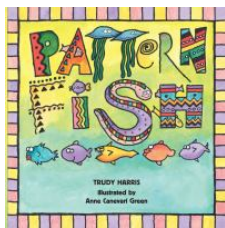


What other patterns can you think of?

Math Language

Here are some math words to get you started: pattern, before, after, shapes (circle, rectangle, triangle, square), big, small, stripes, circles

Let's Read



[Pattern Fish](#) by Trudy Harris

Illustrations and rhyming text describe various patterns depicted by different fish.