



Discover Shapes in Many Places

Young children love to find shapes all around them. Understanding shapes is an important mathematical skill for young children to develop. Here are some ways you can help your child learn about shapes and to talk about and work with them in meaningful ways.

Point out familiar shapes

Talk about common two-dimensional shapes such as circles, squares, and triangles and three-dimensional shapes such as balls, cubes, and cones. Name the shapes children often see in nature, their home, and around their neighborhood.



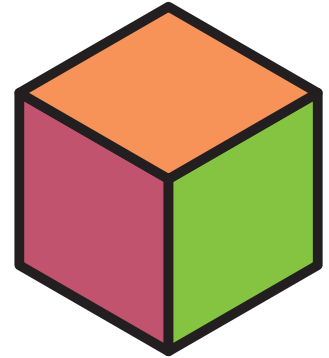
Expand their vocabulary about shapes

Use words that help children describe shapes accurately. Some words to include are *side*, *solid*, *surface*, *point*, *straight*, *curve*, *inside*, *flat*, *top*, and *angle*.



Explore new dimensions

Introduce words for three-dimensional shapes. Talk about how a can has a round flat circle on top but the whole shape is called a cylinder. Show children one side of a block that has the shape of a square and explain that the whole shape is called a cube.



Explore the concept of shapes

Playing board games, participating in sports, building with blocks, and creating with recycled materials are all opportunities for children to problem solve with and talk about shapes.



KIDS Cognition: Math 6 – Shapes

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this tip sheet are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois State Board of Education.



Illinois
State Board of
Education

