

Are there objects around the home that have familiar shapes?

Help your child identify shape names and characteristics with the many surfaces and solid figures that he or she sees every day.

- Ask your child to look for two-dimensional shapes, such as circles, squares, triangles, and rectangles, on objects at home or outside. Street signs and toys (blocks, Lego, toy cars or play tea sets) are often made up of these familiar shapes.
- Have your child look for three-dimensional objects – cubes, cones, spheres, prisms, pyramids, and cylinders. Talk about how a pop can is like a cylinder, and how a baseball is really a sphere.

Use directional words to help find a hidden object.

Prepare for this game by thinking about the object you will ask for and considering the directions you will give to lead your child to it. Then, challenge your child to find that object in your home.

- Say, “Can you find the calculator for me? That’s the square machine with the number buttons on the front and the screen.”
- Give clues using words and phrases such as *up*, *down*, *under*, *between*, *through*, and *on top of*. “I left it on top of the desk upstairs.”
- Make the task more challenging with two part directions: “look in the right hand corner under the pile of papers there.”

What shape best describes an object?

This is an easy game to help your child build an awareness of ordinary shapes.

- Play “I Spy” with your child, asking him or her to find something to answer the riddle when you say, “I spy...something that is round,” or, “I spy...something that is rectangular.”
- Make the game even more challenging by spying an object with two shapes: “I spy...something that is round and has a square drawn in the centre of it.”

What are the shapes that make up other shapes?

Make a shape map from memory.

- Together with your child, choose a picture from a book, magazine or newspaper. Study and talk about the various shapes that are within the picture. “See how that pine tree looks like a triangle? And that picnic table is a rectangle held up by smaller rectangles.”
- Cover the picture. Then ask your child to draw or describe the picture, using the shapes associated with the objects in the picture. Can you child tell you where each object was in the picture?

What would our community look like from the air?

Develop this activity on a small enough scale that your child is able to relate to both the size and distance of the map you are making.

- Talk about the street that you live on, or where you live in relation to a familiar place, like the corner store. Use directional words and phrases like *beside* and *to the right of*, as well as words describing shape and size (*square building*, *bigger than*).
- draw a map of your neighbourhood, marking landmarks and familiar places. How do we make apartment buildings look bigger than houses? Is our street a straight line, or is it curved? What other features can be represented by specific shapes?