HOME ACTIVITY

Play Dough Shapes

What's The Point

The purpose of this activity is to help your child identify shapes and make patterns. Shapes are one category of pattern and are the foundation for geometry.

Video

PBS KIDS Lab | Virtual Pre-K | Shapes: At Home
From the Virtual Pre-K: Ready For Math toolkit

This Activity Will Help Your Child

- Identify and name shapes
- Compare sizes
- Develop the muscles in fingers and hands that are used for writing
- Measure ingredients

Book Suggestions

- ROUND IS A MOONCAKE
  by Roseanne Thong
- SHAPES, SHAPES, SHAPES
  by Tana Hoban

Supplies

- 1 cup salt
- 1 cup warm water
- 2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- A few drops of food coloring (optional)
- Large bowl
- Large spoon for mixing
- Plastic or dull table knife
- Rolling pin or soup can

How Do I Do It?

Together with your child, measure all ingredients into the bowl and mix thoroughly. Sprinkle some flour on a table or countertop and knead the dough with your child until it's smooth. Now it's time to make shapes! Ideas for creating shapes with your play dough:

- Use your hands to form shapes out of the dough and name each shape as you make it. Ask your child to make the same shapes. Count the sides and corners of each shape together.
- Roll out the dough with a rolling pin or a soup can, and use a plastic knife to cut out shapes.
- Roll the play dough between your hands and make balls and "snakes".
- Make several sized balls and have your child identify the largest and smallest.
- Bend the "snakes" into different shapes such as triangles and squares.
- Use your shapes to make a pattern, such as circle, square, circle, square. Ask your child what shape comes next in the pattern.

Take It Further

To minimize the mess, use a tray or cookie sheet for a contained play space, and be sure your child is supervised when working with play dough. Store your play dough in a plastic zipper bag or wrap it tightly in plastic wrap, and place in the refrigerator. As a shortcut, store-bought play dough can also be used for this activity.