



This is the third in a series of Learning on the Go Tips about early math skills that help children get ready for school.

Learning on the Go: Early Learning Tips for Young Children

Patterns

Helping children recognize and make patterns can be a fun math activity. Here are some ideas:

- The earliest type of pattern a baby may recognize is the family routine. Getting up, eating, napping, eating, napping, eating, and going to bed is all part of a pattern that the baby repeats every day.
- Patterns are everywhere! Start pointing them out early. The wallpaper has an elephant, a zebra, and a giraffe —and then the pattern is repeated. The American flag has a white stripe, a red stripe, a white stripe and so on.
- Make your own patterns with food. The afternoon snack can be an apple slice followed by a banana slice and so on. Kids also love to make necklaces out of colored cheerios and can make their own pattern as they string them.
- Try making patterns with:
 - a musical instrument: soft, soft, loud, soft, soft, loud...
 - body movements: jump, wiggle, spin...
 - handprints in the snow or sand: my hand, Mom's hand, Dad's hand...

Learning to see and create patterns helps children get ready for another math concept: predicting and estimating.

Thanks to readyatfive.org for allowing us to use some of their ideas in this tip.

This publication was produced in whole or in part with funds from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, Parental Information and Resource Center program, under grant # 84.310A. The content herein does not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Education, any other agency of the U.S. government, or any other source.