



Shape It Up!

Children explore a variety of shapes through tracing, using scissor skills, and play.

START

- The goal of this activity is for children to learn about shapes through exploring their outlines, cutting out, drawing, and making new designs with them.
- Set up the table with the stencils, paper, scissors, glue sticks, and markers.
- Introduce the activity by asking Who would like to pick a shape to trace or cut out? You're going to trace around the shape and then cut it out. Make sure you set the children up around the table so that they each have enough room to move their arms comfortably while tracing.
- Set up the *Color Zoo* book nearby for kids to look through.

NEXT STEPS

- For younger children, you can start by letting them pick a shape or stencil to hold. Just handling the object is an important step in learning about shapes. Encourage them to feel it with their eyes closed, slip it onto their arm and turn it to feel the different kinds of edges, and trace it with their fingertips. If they are ready to trace, start them on a simple geometric shape.
- For older children, they can trace and cut out the shapes they traced, they can cut out the shapes already drawn, or they can try to freehand draw and then cut out their shapes.
- Cutting proficiency will vary. The youngest children may simply make little "feathering" snips at the edges while you hold the paper; the oldest may be able to cut out a complex shape. You can support their efforts by saying things like Take your time, scissors are tricky! How does it feel? Wow, you're a good cutter!
- Be sure to name each shape as you talk with the children. You can ask Is anyone working on a big circle? How about a little circle? Can someone draw a triangle?
- As the children are finishing their shapes, you can read *Color Zoo* aloud or just show them the pictures in the book. Talk about how they can combine shapes to form new shapes; they can even make animals, cars, or houses!

MATERIALS

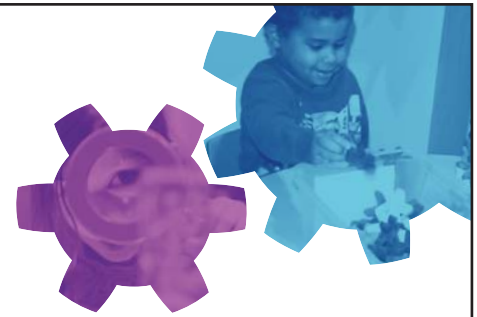
- * Paper plates with the following shapes cut out from the inside: circle, square, triangle, rectangle, oval
- * 4 x 6" colored paper with shapes drawn on them for cutting out
- * Assorted white and colored paper
- * Assorted shapes pre-cut on colored paper
- * Scissors
- * Glue sticks
- * Crayons and markers
- * *Color Zoo* by Lois Ehlert

Learning Guideline:

Math: Investigate and identify materials of various shapes, using appropriate language. Find examples of basic shapes, such as circles, squares, triangles, and rectangles, in the environment.

Tip Sheets: Think, Cut

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- Encourage the children to use their imaginations to create new shapes, combining the ones they've cut out. For example, ask if anyone can use their squares to create a triangle. Or you can show them that you can put two small triangles on a circle to make a cat's face. They can use the pre-cut shapes to enhance their designs and can glue them together for a finished product.

FINISH UP

- Let the children show their finished designs to each other, ask them which shapes they used and if they have any stories about them.
- When everyone is done, make sure they throw away their scraps, return the caps to the glue sticks, and put the stencils and sample shapes back into the center of the table.

EXPAND YOUR ACTIVITY

- Play a game in which the leader holds up a shape (you can use your own paper-plate stencils or cutouts) and everyone helps to identify the shape. Then the children look for that shape on themselves; whoever has the shape steps out in front. As each shape is shown, more and more children can step out. If there are any children remaining, help to show them a shape anywhere on themselves (eyes can be ovals, a shirt sleeve can be a rectangle). The game can also be adapted to locating objects in a room.

TAKE IT HOME

- Let your child look around the house for all kinds of objects to trace: books, jar lids, or jewelry. See what kinds of art they can create with their shapes and different types of surfaces. Let them glue pieces together to form abstract shape art.

BOOKS

- *My First Book of Cutting* (Kumon Workbooks)
- *Round Is a Mooncake: A Book of Shapes* by Roseanne Thong
- *Shape Capers* by Cathryn Falwell
- *Color Zoo* by Lois Ehlert

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