Technology Activity
Shape It Up!

SETUP

- The goal of this activity is for children to practice their early writing and scissors skills by tracing familiar shapes as well as drawing and cutting them out.
- Set up the table with the stencils, paper, scissors, crayons, and markers.

DO IT TOGETHER

- Show your young child how to hold her scissors. (The thumb goes in the top hole, pointer finger in the lower hole. The middle finger rests just below the rim of the lower hole to support the scissors.) Draw a simple wide line from the top to bottom of the paper. “Can you cut along the line?” Remind your child that the thumb should always be in the top hole of the scissors.

- For your older child, draw basic shapes on the paper, and let her cut them out. “Try cutting out these shapes. Wow! You’re a good cutter!” It’s important to applaud her efforts. Learning to control the scissors and cut is hard work!

- Let your child choose a stencil to trace. She may want to spend some time exploring the way the stencil shapes feel. “Try feeling the circle with your eyes closed. Slip the square on your arm and turn it to feel the different kinds of edges. Can you trace the diamond with your fingertips?” This helps your child learn about the shapes, which in turn can help her feel more comfortable drawing and cutting them.

- To use the stencil, place a piece of paper under it, tape it to the paper, and have your child follow the lines with her crayon or marker. “I can see how hard you’re concentrating. Following those lines is hard work. That’s a nice big diamond you traced!”

- When your child is done tracing, she can cut out her shape. Remember that cutting proficiency will vary. Very young children may simply make little “feathering” snips at the edges while you hold the paper, while the oldest may be able to cut out a complex shape. You can support your child’s efforts by saying things like “Take your time; scissors are tricky! How does it feel? You’ve made a lot of progress on that square!”

(continued on side 2)
(continued from side 1)

DO MORE OF IT!

- **Shape Hunt.** Walk around the house with your child to look for all kinds of objects to trace: books, jar lids, or even cookie cutters. Tape the objects to a paper surface and let your child trace the shapes and cut them out. You can use lots of interesting types of paper, such as wrapping paper or tissue paper, magazines, or colorful construction sheets. After your child has cut out the shapes, she can glue them together to create an abstract art collage! Handling shapes and gluing them down are also great ways to practice fine motor skills.

- **Art Lesson.** Read an Eric Carle or Leo Lionni book together (see the books listed below). Talk about the illustrations; both authors use shapes that they have traced and cut out. With your child, look at the author videos (see the resources listed below) to get ideas for doing your own drawing, tracing, cutting out, and collaging projects. Work with your child to make up a story and illustrate it with your child’s own shape cutouts.

BOOKS

- *My First Book of Cutting* (Kumon Workbooks)
- *Frederick* by Leo Lionni
- *The Mixed-Up Chameleon* by Eric Carle
- *My Very First Book of Shapes/Mi Primer Libro de Figuras* by Eric Carle

OTHER RESOURCES

- Visit your local library.
- Visit your local museum, nature center, zoo, or aquarium.
- Check out Brain Building Zones for local events in Massachusetts at http://brainbuildinginprogress.org/event-calendar.
- Learn how Leo Lionni traces, cuts, and glues his mouse illustrations by watching his narrated “Leo Makes a Mouse” video at http://www.randomhousekids.com/brand/leo-lionni/videos.
- Visit the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst, Massachusetts to see lots of examples of tracing, cutting, and collaging work. See http://www.carlemuseum.org.

MATERIALS

- Paper stencils: cut out a circle, square, triangle, rectangle, oval, and diamond shape from card stock or a paper plate
- Paper for drawing and cutting
- Child-safe scissors
- Tape
- Crayons and markers

Learning Guideline:
PreK-LS1-4: Use their five senses in their exploration and play to gather information.

Funded by:
Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant