



Supporting parents and caregivers with children birth to five years with early learning and development at home

### Let's play with shapes

#### SHAPES

**Shapes are everywhere!** Learning shapes does not only help children to identify and organise what they can see, they are the basics they need to understand and forms the base for reading, writing, mathematics and science. *The same skills that they learn by identifying different shapes in the early years, are the skills that they will use to identify the differences in shape between letters and numbers.*

A young child who is able to understand the differences in shapes is better able to notice the differences in shapes of letters. This helps not only with reading but also with writing.

Shape activities can help young children develop problem-solving skills. When a child recognizes the features of a square, it can match it with the square-hole on a toy. Shape recognition can also help when putting together puzzles. If the child pays attention to the shapes of the pieces and the shapes of the openings in the puzzle, it can work out the correct spot for each piece.

#### For PARENTS

##### CORRECT INFORMATION

There are a lot of stories going around. Some may not be true. Be careful where you look for information and advice!

Get the correct information about the **coronavirus (COVID-19)**. Speak accurately about the risk of COVID-19 based facts and the latest official health advice. Remember to use **age-appropriate language**, watch their reactions and be sensitive to their level of anxiety.

You can look at 'COVID-19 coronavirus explained to parents of young children' that is available at <https://www.unicef.org/southafrica/reports/covid-19-coronavirus-explained-parents-young-children>.

#### Today's shape is a SQUARE

Put as many objects that are **square** in the house on a tablecloth like a square cushion, slice of bread, handkerchief or a square biscuit. Talk about the shape of these items.



#### BOOK OF THE DAY

##### Singing the Truth: The story of Miriam Makeba

tells the story of the amazing life of a little girl who grew up to use her gift of singing to help bring freedom to South Africa.

Download the book for free at <https://bookdash.datafree.co/books/singing-the-truth-by-louwrisa-blaauw-jade-mathieson-and-bianca-de-jong/>



SOURCE: Bookdash

### Learning together is FUN

Here are some playful activities to do with your young child today (and other days too)

#### Getting active in the morning

**Shape-hunt game:** A fun way to help your child learn shapes is to make a shape-hunt game. Choose a shape, for example a **square**, and ask your child to look around in the house or outside for objects that match that shape.

For young children, do this in one room only. For older children, you can ask them to find objects of the shape anywhere in the house or yard. You can also page through an old magazine with your child and 'hunt' for the shape in the pages. Enjoy hunting and remember to have fun!

#### Younger than 18 months

Let your baby explore toys or objects that have lines and other **shapes**.

*This helps babies to make the link between what their eyes can see and what is in their hands. They also try to reach for the object and pick it up. This helps to develop the small muscles in their hands and fingers which helps with writing. Seeing and touching helps to develop the senses.*

#### 18 months to 36 months

Ask your child to put different **shapes** into a shape sorter that has at least 4 shapes including a **circle**, a **triangle**, a **square** and a **rectangle**. It is important to include a square and a rectangle, which look and feel very similar, but are different shapes.



#### 3 to 5 years

Cut the following shapes out of cardboard (you can use an old cereal box or similar): two **circles**, five **triangles**, five **squares**, three **rectangles**, two **heart-shapes** and three **diamond** shapes. Draw each of these on a piece of paper. Give the cut-out shapes to your child and ask it to sort shapes that are fairly similar according to a picture of the shape that you drew.



#### HEALTHY HABITS

If you **COUGH** or **SNEEZE** cover your nose and mouth with a tissue please (*throw the tissue away after using it*)



It is very interesting to see how the child will try and try until it finds the right hole. This shows you that your child is learning to solve problems. Its concentration and persistence also improve as it tries to fit the shape into the hole.

Remember to keep it **PLAYFUL** and **FUN**. That is how young children learn.