

Attribute Blocks: Exploring Shape

Step in Progression	Interaction Ideas (Attribute blocks)
Objects the same	<p>As opportunities arise naturally, identify a shape and ask the children to find another one that is the same. Question them about what makes the shapes the same to draw their attention to the features of the objects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you find a shape like Hemi's one? How is it like Hemi's? • Have you got a shape similar to this one? What makes it similar? • Can you get another one that looks like Chloe's. How does it look like Chloe's? • Can you find me another one like that? What makes that one the same? <p>When children are playing with shapes support them to find pairs of shapes that are the same. Encourage pairings based on a variety of different shape features, as this extends the range of features children are familiar with. For example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you find 2 shapes that are the same? What is the same about them? • Let's match this shape with one another that is the same. What makes them the same? • Which shape can we pair with this one? Tell me why you think they go together? • Can we find a shape that is the same as this one? How are they the same?
Objects the same and different	<p>As opportunities arise in play encourage children to sort shapes on the basis of their similarities and differences. This helps them develop the understanding that similar objects can be grouped. For example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let's make a pile of shapes that are alike? How are they the same? • Can you help me sort these shapes into groups? How shall we sort them? • Can you help, which pile/group should I put this shape in? • Where does this square belong? How do you know? <p>Follow the sorting with questions that encourage children to describe their thinking with a focus on the attributes of the shapes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is this triangle the same the ones in this pile? • How is this shape different to those ones? • What is the same about the circles in this pile? • Why did you put these shapes together? • Why don't these shapes belong with these ones? • Why does this rectangle belong in that group? <p>Use the shape sorting questions above in a variety of role play contexts. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a shape shop and ask the children to help organise the shapes into piles on the shelves. • Make shape trains and ask the children to sort the shapes into groups for each carriage. • Make shape soup and ask the children to help by sorting the shapes into

different groups for different pots of soup.

Classifying objects

When children are playing with 2-dimensional shapes and 3-dimensional objects, provide them with some boxes and encourage them to sort the shapes into these. Listening to the features the children use to sort will give you information about the features they know. Focus on unknown features to extend their knowledge.

- This triangle has 3 sides and is flat. Let's put all the triangles in this box. Who can find one?
- Look at the shape Crystal's found. Does it belong in our box? Is it the same as the one in there? How?
- What about that shape? it's a square. Does that belong with these ones? Why? What is the same about them?
- Jeremy has found a long shape called an oval. Does that fit with the ones in our box? Why not?

Play a "guess the shape" game by hiding a shape inside an opaque bag and telling the children about its features. Take turns hiding and describing the shape. Ask each child to get a shape they think is the same as the one in the bag.

- I have a flat shape with 3 sides in the bag. Can everybody get one which they think is the same as mine?
- I have a solid shape that rolls. Who can find one like that?
- This shape is flat and has 4 corners. Get you one the same?

After everybody has chosen a shape, reveal the hidden shape and ask the children about the shapes they have selected.

- Tell me about all the shapes people chose.
- Which shapes are the same? How are they similar?
- Which shapes don't belong in this group? Why? What makes them different?
- What's the same about all these shapes?