

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Teaching children about patterns

Pattern is an integral part of everyday life, it is all around us - visible and invisible. The most obvious and visible patterns are found in things such as clothes and materials but there are lots of invisible patterns too, such as routines.

Research shows that children's ability to identify patterns forms the basis of early mathematical thinking (Rittle-Johnson et al, 2016). For example, pattern awareness helps children to memorise the stable order of the counting sequence and to notice similarities and differences in amounts.

Here are some top tips to help develop your confidence in teaching children about patterns.



1. Demonstrate an interest in pattern and model the language of patterns, for example, *before, after, next*
2. Talk about patterns you notice around you, for example spots on clothing
3. Provide visual patterns such as materials and highlight patterns in the natural environment such as patterns on leaves, day turning to night and the changing seasons
4. Babies are drawn to the pattern of faces and high contrast patterns. Hold them close and provide high contrast mobiles or images for them to focus on
5. Use stories, rhymes, songs, music and movement. For example, sing rhymes with predictable movements or repeated actions such as *Five little ducks* or *Heads, shoulders, knees and toes* and read books which contains a sequence such as *Dear Zoo* by Rod Campbell
6. Leave space/time for children to fill in the next action or word in familiar songs and stories
7. Provide natural and malleable materials as well as blocks and shapes for making patterns. Model simple patterns, explore different arrangements of the same amount and make deliberate mistakes for children to playfully correct (see this week's MyNDNA activity for ideas)
8. Explore pattern in numbers though outdoor games such as skittles
9. Use visual timetables to highlight daily patterns
10. Talk with older children about patterns of behaviour which can be useful in helping them to regulate their own actions.

NDNA products to support you

- Course: [EYFS Mathematics](#)



Tip

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Find more resources at www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna