

# Matching Shapes and Sizes

*Can you find one like mine?*



Help your child notice two things that match in a set of three items.

Your child may begin to pay closer attention to similarities and differences.



## Why this is important

This game will help your child notice the similarities and differences in objects. When asked to choose or identify an object, she must focus on an item's identifying features (hard, soft, round, straight, big, small, etc.). Noticing these special features helps your child recognize new objects and compare them to things she has seen before. Practicing with three-dimensional objects that she can hold and explore will also help prepare her to notice the distinctive features of two-dimensional items such as letters on a page.

## What you do

- Offer your toddler three objects of the same size and color. Two of them should be the same shape, such as two yellow balls and a yellow block. Talk about each object she picks up. *That is a smooth, round ball. It's yellow.* Point out the two similar objects.
- Pick up one of the two similar objects and hold it up for her to see. Ask her to find the other one. *Can you find one like this?* When she finds it, hold your hand next to hers so that she can see the objects together.
- Provide encouragement if she chooses the different object. *You found the one that is different. This other one is like mine. See, it's round.*
- Speak lovingly each time she chooses, even if she chooses the object that doesn't match. At first she may choose randomly until she understands the game. Give her many opportunities to play.

## Another idea

Some items that work well for matching shapes are: spoons and forks, balls and blocks, or round and square plastic lids. To practice with items of varying sizes, try big and little spoons, plastic cups, or socks.

### Let's read together!

*Mouse Shapes*  
by Ellen Stoll Walsh

# Button and Zip



Lead your child through the steps of buttoning and unbuttoning and zipping and unzipping.

Your child will become more confident with her personal care skills of dressing and undressing.

*You're moving  
that zipper up,  
up, up.*



## Why this is important

Guiding your child in learning to button and zip helps her learn the skills needed for independent dressing. Children who are struggling to be independent often are unwilling to accept the help they need. By learning the more difficult steps like buttoning and zipping, she will be able to take care of her own dressing at home or school.

## What you do

- Give your child a smock or sweater with large buttons and buttonholes. Explain and demonstrate how to put the button through the buttonhole.
- Show her how to push the button halfway through the hole. Then, hold that part of the button as she pulls the cloth over the other half.
- Keep a few garments handy that have easy-to-fasten buttons. Let her practice during a long car ride or while waiting at the doctor's office. Encourage her to button her own clothes when she is ready.
- Teach her how to zip a zipper by letting her zip up your coat for you. Explain how to hold the bottom of the coat as she pulls up on the zipper.
- Resist the urge to finish the job for her. She needs lots of practice to master this skill!

## Another idea

Invite your child to practice buttoning and zipping in front of a mirror. Encourage her to show a friend or relative what she is learning.

### Let's read together!

*Zippers, Buttons, and Bows*  
by Moira Butterfield

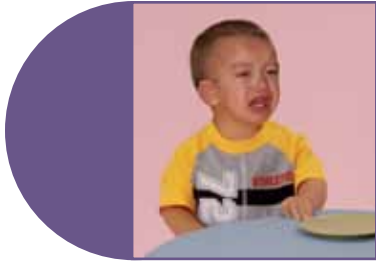
# Expressing Needs

Talk to your child about what he needs.

Giving him words to express his needs gradually develops his ability to tell you what he needs and wants.

*You're hungry. You need your cereal.*





## Why this is important

By giving your child the words to express his needs, you help him begin to understand that he needs certain things in certain situations. When you ask him about his needs, he has the opportunity to use gestures and simple words to express himself. The more words he can use to clearly express his needs, the more likely his needs will be met.

## What you do

- Give your child words to describe his needs. Help your child talk about what he sees and experiences. Here are a few examples:

*You need a spoon for your cereal. I'll get it for you.*

*You need a bath before bedtime. Can you find your rubber boat?*

*You need a warm coat to go out today. It's cold outside.*

- Guess what his needs are by observing his gestures and body language. When he looks or points at an object, try to put his action into words to show him you are trying to understand. *Do you need the doll?* He will appreciate your effort to understand and help him.
- Notice when he begins to use simple words such as *cold* or *hungry* to let you know what he needs. Respond to him quickly to let him know you understand.

## Ready to move on?

You can encourage your child to talk about his own needs by asking questions. *Do you have something to put your sand in? How can you reach that high shelf? Would you like me to hold you?*

### Let's read together!

*Big Dog & Little Dog*  
by Dav Pilkey

# Family Album

*What does Daddy  
like to eat?*



Help your child make an album of photos and facts about his family.

The process will help your child organize and express his knowledge of his family.



*Tell me about  
our family.*



## Why this is important

A simple album can remind young children of their substantial family knowledge and family relationships. Creating an album will help your child think about the members of his family and what they do. An album also may increase your child's enjoyment of books, pictures, and print.

## What you do

- Take a week or more to help your child create an album that tells something about his family.
- Create a page for each family member by gluing or taping a photo of that person to a sheet of paper.
- Help your child choose a family member each day to think about: *What is Mommy's favorite food? Favorite color? An activity she likes?*
- Encourage your child to ask the family member if he does not already know the answers to your questions.
- Help him search through magazines to find pictures that represent the answer to each question. Give him glue or tape to attach the pictures to the photo page. Or, offer him some crayons or markers to see if he would like to draw the pictures.
- Build the story of his family, one member at a time, until all pages are completed.
- Ask your child to decorate a page to use as the cover, and then fasten the pages together to make a book.
- Take time to review the book together, and invite your child to share the book with others.

## Another idea

Invite your child to share his family album with a visitor. You may enjoy hearing how your child describes his family and the details he remembers.

### Let's read together!

*All Families Are Special*  
by Norma Simon