

Activity ideas

Shape Drive Arouds & Connectors

E0266 & E0291

Sometimes the simplest ideas are the best. These four shapes are hand-made from beautiful FSC beech wood. Perfect for all small world play environments, children's imaginations will soar as they create little worlds of their own. The shapes give the ideal opportunity to introduce and encourage the use of early mathematical language: shape, square, circle, triangle, rectangle, sides, inside, outside, edges, more, less, corner. If you add the Connector Set the opportunities are endless!



*Sprinkle maths into
small world play*

Here are some ideas for learning through play.

Shape of the Week

Have a 'Shape of the Week' - look around your setting, with the children, finding things that are that shape. Let's start with a circle. It might be a table, or a mat, the top of a cup or a plate. Talk about how big they are. Ask which is the smallest? Which is the biggest? If you go outside with the children look for circles all around. It might be a STOP sign or a window, etc.

Find and collect lots of little things that are circles and put them on the Circle Shape Drive Around. You might find buttons and coasters, pebbles, wheels, slices of wood from your loose parts play. Look at your collection of circles together and talk about what makes them the same, or different. Which is the biggest and which is the smallest circle?

Don't forget to include the 'Shape of the Week' in your artist endeavors too. You might dip the top of a cup into some paint and make circular prints. Or maybe you have circular sponges to use with different coloured paints.

Play 'Eye Spy a Circle' with the older children, inside or outside. You can have some fun with this, looking for circles inside other shapes, like the pupil in your eye, or the clock on the wall.



What can you see in the home corner?

Sing 'Round and round a circle like a teddy bear' and trace circles on the palm of the children's hands. You can do it to each other!

Trace a circle on a child's back. Can they guess what it is?

Squidgy, smell play dough! Use different size circular cutters and different colours of play dough. Use the Shape Drive Around Circle as the smooth base for your play dough play. Roll out the play dough and cut out lots of different sized and coloured circles. For the older children describe them using more than one attribute – for example, the big, yellow circle.

Put the circles in order of size. Which is the biggest? Which is the smallest? Gather the same size or same colour circles together.

You can do the above ideas with each of the other Shape Drive Arouns.



Small World Play

Let's make a Shape Town, with Triangle Terrace, Circle Street, Rectangle Road and Square Square! With trees and houses, people and cars, let the children imagine their own world and play. But seize every opportunity to sprinkle in some mathematical language and thinking.

Maybe the houses each have a different coloured door, so you can match the red car to the red door, for example.



Maybe each house has a car and a person and a tree and a dog.
 Maybe everyone who lives on Circle Street goes to visit everyone on Triangle Terrace, navigating around, across, over, turning left, turning right.

Add some arches over the roads and you add lots of opportunities for language development – over and under, too big, too small, just right!

Let's Compare

For older children (preschoolers and reception) the four shapes give lots of lovely mathematical concepts to explore. Have you noticed that the circle fits perfectly inside the square, so the distance across the middle of the circle is the same as the length of each side of the square. Or that the rectangle is exactly half the size of the square, which means you could fit two rectangles inside the square. Or that all three sides of the triangle are the same size. In fact, they are the same size as the side of the square and the long side of the rectangle!



Quiet Time

Shape Drive Arounds have a lovely smooth, level base for play. With a collection of loose parts, or play dough, or both, they make a perfect base for creating mandalas. Just follow the edge and add your own patterns and imagination.



Everything changes but the learning stays the same

Children need to experience each mathematical concept over and over and over again but tweaked and changed so it feels fresh and different. So don't be afraid to repeat activities but with a new seasonal twist! Maybe it is snowing in Circle Street, or there's an Easter Egg Hunt on Rectangle Road.

Get talking – useful words:

shape	outside	diameter
square	edges	under
circle	more	over
triangle	less	through
rectangle	corner	compare
sides	bigger	left
inside	smaller	right

Bring a seasonal twist to each activity