

Perfectly Playful Patterns

Have you noticed patterns in nature? On your next outing, look closely at the bark of a tree or a fallen seed—you may start to see patterns everywhere! A pattern is an arrangement of things that repeat. Patterns can be created with letters; ABAB is a basic pattern. Patterns can also be made with lines, shapes, colors or objects. For children, identifying and making patterns helps them develop math and science skills of comparing, sorting and predicting.

Take a walk outside with your children and see what kinds of patterns you can find in nature!

Tree Bark

Maybe you will find a pattern of repeating **lines** on the bark of a tree. Below are pictures of two different kinds of trees with very different patterns on the bark. Ask your children if they can find two different kinds of trees in your neighborhood. They can use their **eyes** to see the patterns on the trees and **hands** to feel the texture of the bark. How do the trees feel: smooth or bumpy?



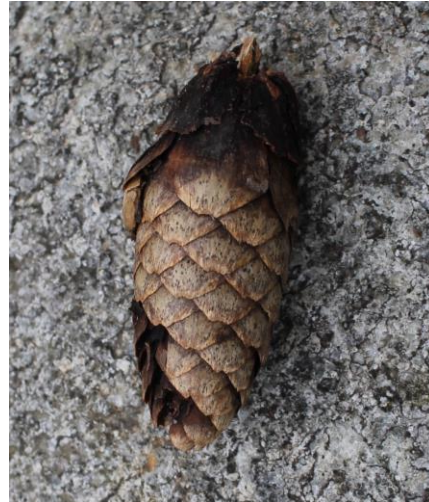
Leaves

Maybe you'll find different kinds of leaves with patterns. Here are some examples of leaves you might find outside. Can your children find two different kinds of leaves outside? What shapes do they see on the leaves? Are they shaped like ovals, or rectangles or another shape?



Other Natural Objects

What other patterns can your children find outside in nature? Look at the pictures below. Can they find these two objects? What are they? (*left, acorn caps; right, pinecone*). What shapes and lines do you see repeating over and over again?



Here's how to get started creating patterns outdoors with an artistic twist.

Ask your children to choose two items to collect and arrange in an alternating pattern (see examples below).



While your children work on placing the items help them think about the pattern by asking “What comes next?” Challenge your children to add decorative items (such as leaves and seeds) or to work on more complex patterns with more than two items.

For additional fun, create self-portraits using some of the collected materials. Be creative! Use a wide variety of materials and patterns to make the facial features.

Indoor Patterns

Use blocks, stuffed animals or pieces of construction paper to make patterns by size, shape and color. With your children, cut out pictures from old magazines, arrange them in a pattern and paste them on a piece of paper. As you collect more pages, attach them together to make a pattern book.

Recommended Reading

One Duck Stuck by Phyllis Root.

This book is available online from the Ossining Public Library through TumbleBooks

<https://ossininglibrary.org/digital-library-2/ebooks-and-audiobooks/>

For more fun with patterns, visit these websites:

<https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/patterns-and-categorizing>

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/299-help-your-child-develop-early-math-skills>

