

## Mathematical moments: Pattern with 4 & 5 year olds

### Making border patterns



Two boys in the reception class had succeeded in making a continuous border pattern with pom-poms around a rectangular mirror. They had understood that to make the pattern 'work', the unit of repeat had to carry on repeating 'round and round for ever'. Their pattern had a repeating unit of three white pom-poms, two yellow and one blue, resulting in a very wavy border around the rectangle. When Sue asked them if they could make it fit better, one of the boys said: *I might change the pattern*. He then removed one of the yellow pom-poms from each unit of repeat. This seemed an impressive example of patterning by a five-year-old: instead of simply removing one of the repeating units he had chosen to alter the structure of the unit. Asked how they would tell someone else to make the pattern, he said, *White, white, white - three whites* and his friend finished *...Blue, yellow and start over and over*.



pom-pom border pattern