

Mathematical moments with 2 year olds

Maths topic: shape properties

Title: Sidney and the shape puzzle



Sidney (2 years and 3 months) is confidently and quickly selecting the correct shapes to fit onto the pegged board. His parent narrates as he

plays and then points to the square shape and asks him if he knows what the shape is. He holds it up vertically, inspects it and calls it “a tall shape”. She responds positively. He knows the name of the triangle when asked (which surprises her) and he calls the circle a “round and round shape” and then a “snail shape” as it has a snail painted on one side.

There is a lot of play and talk that has gone on, so that Sidney is able to do all of this so confidently. Mathematical talk and language is about recognising, hearing and describing properties of, and differences between, shapes, rather than simply naming them. Here Sidney is using a mixture of his own language and shape names very effectively. The adult uses the mathematical names alongside, but focussing solely on mathematical naming can stop the child examining the properties of the shapes. On another occasion you also might choose to talk about the number of holes, for example three sides and three holes, four sides and four holes.

Note: Although the shapes are not accurate 2D shapes geometrically, as they have rounded corners and depth, such toys are useful for young children to begin to explore different shapes.

[Video of this activity.](#)