

Shape, space and measure 1

**Explore and build with  
shapes and objects**

## Teacher guidance



### Books

- *Big and Small* by Elizabeth Bennett
- *Whatever Next!* by Jill Murphy
- *Crash! Boom! A Math Tale* by Robie H. Harris



### Rhymes

- *Build It Up*

### Top tips

- Ensure provision has a range of items to explore building and making arrangements.
- Support children in provision with their physical skills when beginning to hold, pick up and transport shapes and objects.
- Encourage children to repeat actions to develop their gross and fine motor strength.

### Key resources

- wooden blocks
- jigsaws
- inset puzzles
- shape sorter



## Small steps

Step 1

Explore and play with shapes

Step 2

Show interest in simple differences between shapes

Step 3

Put shapes and blocks into position

Step 4

Select shapes for a reason

Step 5

Begin to explore and describe natural shapes and objects

Step 6

Find and collect objects for a purpose

# Explore and build with shapes and objects

## Notes and guidance

In this block, exploration of simple shape, space and measure is developed. Children need to be given many opportunities to explore shapes and objects as well as manoeuvring themselves into spaces and around each other.

Allow time to explore construction materials and observe the objects that children naturally choose to build with. Children may wish to carry the shapes they have selected first before they then decide to build with them. This is part of the transporting schema and the beginning of the building journey progression.

Encourage children to explore simple stacking and moving construction in different ways and into different positions. Prompt children to select bricks and items by asking if they can find one that is bigger or smaller than the one they have.

Introducing simple inset puzzles and shape sorters can support children's selections of shapes and objects and form the first instances of selecting and rotation of objects.

## Sentence stems

- I have chosen this shape/object because ...
- I need this \_\_\_\_ for my ...
- I am using ...
- This \_\_\_\_ is big/small.

## Key questions

- What have you collected?
- What are you using?
- Do you think this will fit?
- Can you find something bigger?

## Links to the curriculum

*Development Matters* – 3 and 4-year-olds – Talk about and explore 2D and 3D shapes.

Examples of how to support this: Encourage children to play freely with blocks, shapes, shape puzzles and shape-sorters.

*Birth to 5 Matters* – Range 3

- Pushes objects through different shaped holes, and attempts to fit shapes into spaces on inset boards or puzzles
- Beginning to select a shape for a specific space
- Enjoys using blocks to create their own simple structures and arrangements

*Birth to 5 Matters* – Range 4

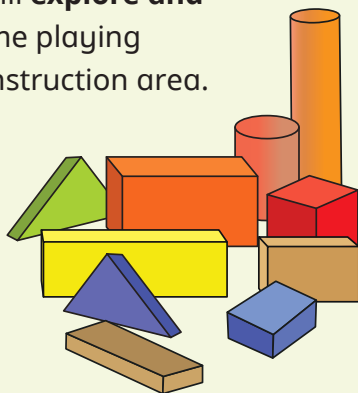
- Chooses puzzle pieces and tries to fit them in
- Makes simple constructions

## Adult-led activities

### Step 1

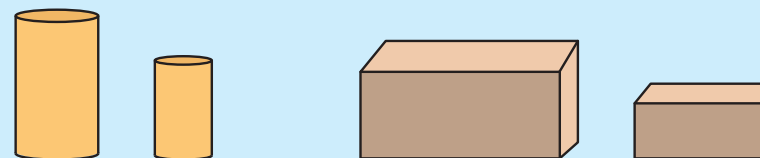
In this small step, children will **explore and play with shapes**. Spend time playing alongside children in the construction area. Encourage children to talk about what they notice about the different blocks.

Support children to place and position the blocks in different ways as they play and build.



### Step 2

In this small step, children will **show interest in simple differences between shapes**. After reading stories such as *Big and Small* by Elizabeth Bennett, explore different sizes of blocks in the construction area.

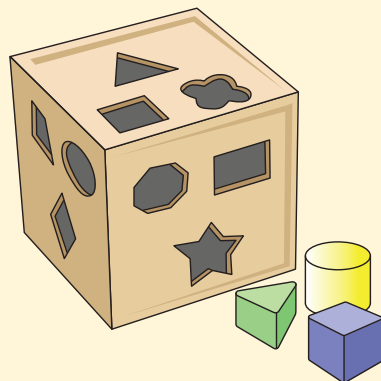


Model the language of 'big', 'bigger', 'small' and 'smaller'.

### Step 3

In this small step, children will **put shapes and blocks into position**. Support children to complete simple inset jigsaws and shape sorters.

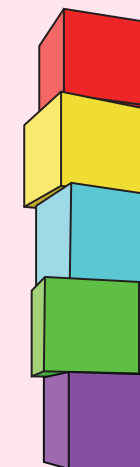
Encourage children to explore rotating and flipping the shapes or jigsaw pieces to make them fit. Support children in their choices by asking why objects might or might not fit.



### Step 4

In this small step, children will **select shapes for a reason**. When playing and building in the construction area, encourage children to select blocks and say why they have chosen each one.

Prompt them to make simple arrangements and towers with the blocks they have chosen.



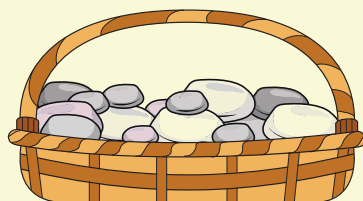
## Adult-led activities

### Step 5

In this small step, children will **begin to explore and describe natural shapes and objects**.

Enhance the construction area with natural objects, such as pebbles and sticks, for children to use in their building. Encourage them to talk about what they notice.

Children could also collect other natural objects from outside and transport them to other areas of provision to enhance their play.



### Step 6

In this small step, children will **find and collect objects for a purpose**. After reading stories such as *Whatever Next!* by Jill Murphy, encourage children to explore the wider provision and look for objects they need to build a rocket to go to space.

Prompt children to find, collect and then carry their objects to the area where they would like to build their rocket.



## Continuous provision

Enhance provision with a range of inset puzzles and shape sorters to consolidate learning. Encourage children to move the puzzle pieces and shapes in different ways in order for them to fit into place.

Enhance provision such as small world with a range of different-sized and different-shaped resources. This could include natural resources such as stones or cardboard tubes and cylinders.

Notice how children use them to enhance their play and how they use them for different purposes.