Discovery Play with Mix & Make Shapes

Children are naturally drawn to building with Mix & Make shapes. Discovery Play is a time for them to build freely, creating beautiful designs, using shapes to build pictures, and testing how to make tall structures. In this play, they are experimenting with size, area, and patterns while building an understanding of the properties of each shape. Discovery Play will make teacher-led discussions more interesting because children will make connections to their play experiences.

Including Discovery Play in Your Day

Children need time to practice skills that they have learned to generalize them into their world. They should have time to explore every day. Mix & Make Shapes can be a part of this play. Set out specific shapes or specific combination of shapes to encourage curiosity. Children will wonder, “What can I do with the shapes today?”

Procedure - Look What I Made!

• Have shapes available on a table or specific play/work area. Children can work individually or in pairs to create pictures or designs with the shapes. Children will explore in many different ways: making pictures such as a house, face, or flower; making patterns or fitting shapes together.
• Encourage children to talk about their creations. Ask questions about their designs. What colors did you use? What shape did you put on top? What did you make? How many circles did you use?
• As children interact with the shapes and with each other, they will use words to describe spatial relationships, position, location, colors, numbers, and shape names.

Other ideas for Discovery Play:
• Make a puzzle: put out the shapes and have children try to match the shapes. You can put out only matching sets or increase the number of shapes for a challenge.
• Sort: put out the shapes and have children sort them by shape, color, or size.
• Add more objects: include some of the pieces or Pattern Boards from 4 Squares More Squares.

Materials
• Variety of Mix & Make Shapes

Geometry is fun and accessible with Mix & Make Shapes. With multisensory activities, preschoolers practice problem solving and spatial reasoning as they explore these multicolored shapes. Children discover new ideas with Mix & Make Shapes. The product includes an assortment of shapes.
• Triangles: 4 large, 2 medium, 8 small right triangles, and 8 small isosceles triangles
• Rectangles: 4 large, 4 small
• Squares: 4 large, 4 medium, 8 small
• Circles: 4 large, 4 small
• 4 Semicircles and 8 quarter circles
• 2 Ovals and 2 amoeba shapes

You’ll like them because . . .
The large sizes and thick foam pieces are perfect for little hands to place. The colors help children find matching pieces and create their own designs. Children can combine smaller pieces to make large pieces. Each shape is a puzzle waiting to be solved. The versatile shapes are ideal for sorting activities, pattern building, and counting.

Where you’ll see them

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number &amp; Operations</th>
<th>Patterns &amp; Algebra</th>
<th>Measurement &amp; Time</th>
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<tbody>
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Are You My Match?

Match Shapes of Different Sizes
Shapes can be similar even when they are different sizes. A shape with three sides and three corners is a triangle no matter what size it is. Your children are ready to learn this by matching shapes of different sizes. This activity helps them learn the characteristics to notice (sides and corners) and the characteristics to ignore (size and color) when they sort by shape.

Materials/Setup:
• Mix & Make Shapes
  – Circles – 1 large, a few small*
  – Triangles – 1 large, a few small*
  – Rectangles – 1 large, a few small*
*each child needs one small shape

Grouping:
Small group or whole class

English Language Learners:
Practice the pattern of question and answer with this activity. Model how to rephrase the question into an answer. Are you my shape? No, you are not my shape.

Objective
Children find similar shapes of different sizes.

Activity
The little shapes want to find something big that is the same shape. Can you help?

1. Ask three students to stand in a line. Give each child a big shape.
2. Hand out small shapes to the other children in the group. Keep a rectangle for yourself.
3. Show how to check for a match. Are you my shape? No! My shape has four corners. Your shape doesn’t have corners. Continue until you find the big rectangle.
4. Give each child a chance to find a big shape of the same kind. Encourage them to talk about why their shapes are the same or different.

Check for Understanding
Post the big shapes in different corners of the room. Give children a small shape. Ask them to move to the big shape that matches their shape. Are they able to make a match?

Support:
Start with the circle and triangle. Talk about corners and sides to explain why shapes match.

More to Learn
My Shapes Match
Use the 4 Squares More Squares pieces to match different size shapes. Use the red, green, and blue Big Pieces. Give a yellow Little Piece to each child and have her find the big shape that matches (red).

I Like Squares, Too
For an extra challenge, include big and small squares in the activity. Talk about what the squares and rectangles have in common.

Look What We’re Learning

Geometry
• Recognize that shapes can be the same even if size differs
Number & Operations
• Verbally count a set of five objects

Social-Emotional
• Take turns

Vocabulary
big
corner
little
same
shape

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Round and Round We Go

Describe Circles
Circles are the easiest shape for children to recognize. They can be found all around—in wheels, buttons, and pancakes. Circles make the letter O and number 0 (zero). With this activity, children describe what makes this familiar shape a circle.

Materials/Setup:
• Mix & Make Shapes
  – 2 Large circles
  – 2 Small circles
  – 4 Half circles
  – 8 Quarter circles

Grouping:
Small group (4)

English Language Learners:
Use this opportunity to build vocabulary. Help children find and name things that are circles (e.g., wheel, clock, cracker). Children may name objects in their home language. This is okay. Encourage them to speak in any language so that they feel comfortable and part of the class.

Objective
Children identify and describe circles.

Activity
Today we will build a shape that goes round and round.

1. Show a big circle. Circles have one round side and no corners. They can roll smoothly along the floor.
2. Give each child a circle. Roll your circle with me. Roll it on your arm. Roll it over your head. Roll it down your body.
3. Pair students who have green circles with students who have orange circles. Give each child a yellow half circle.
4. Put your orange circle on the ground. I have a trick, a trick for you. I can make one out of two. Put two yellow half circles on top of the orange circle. Now you try!
5. Give each child two blue quarter circles. Put your green circle on the ground. I have a trick, a trick on the floor. I can make one out of four. Put four blue quarter circles on top of the green circle. Now you try!

Check for Understanding
After children build circles ask questions:
Did you build a circle?
How do you know?
Are they able to describe circles?

Support: Have children trace the small orange circles. Ask them to tell you about their circles.

More to Learn
Curious Curves
You can also use Wood Pieces for Capital Letters. Use Big Curves and Little Curves to build circles.

Is It a Circle?
For a real challenge, show students all the pieces with curved sides. Which ones are circles?
How do you know?