The Shape of Things

By Dayle Ann Dodds

The colorful illustrations in this book help children to learn about all of the different shapes that are a part of their world. Simple rhymes help reinforce the concept of different shapes.

BEFORE READING:
- Show the children the front of the book. Ask them to guess what the book is about.
- Ask them to name the different shapes they see on the front cover.

WHILE READING:
- Stop at any time if there is something you or the children would like to talk about.
- Ask them questions so that they can connect what is happening in the book to things they already know about. Try some of these ideas:
  ⇒ What shape is the home that you live in?
  ⇒ What other things can you think of that are shaped in a triangle?
  ⇒ Where else have you seen something that is a circle?

AFTER READING:
Spend some time talking about the story. Ask the children things like:
  ⇒ What color was the triangle?
  ⇒ What shape was the kite?
  ⇒ What was your favorite color?

Read this book several times to the children. Hearing the same story again and again helps them learn new words and understand the ideas they hear better. Each day, pick a different activity to do with the children after reading “The Shape of Things”.

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MATH AND SCIENCE
Find pairs of objects of different shapes and sizes around the room. Try things like bowls from the kitchen, towels from the bathroom, empty toilet paper and paper towel rolls, or anything else you can think of. Put the pairs next to each other in front of the children. Ask them to tell you which one is bigger and which one is smaller.

READING READINESS
Ask the children to point to the shapes in the illustrations as you read the words. You can also have them point to the other parts of the illustration as you read. For example, have them point to the ocean or the seagull on the page as you read those words.

MUSIC AND MOVEMENT
Hold different-shaped blocks or cut-out shapes in your hand and sing, “Do you know what shape this is, what shape this is, what shape this is? Do you know shape this is I’m holding in my hand?” Use the tune The Muffin Man as you sing.

MOTOR SKILLS
Make your own train together. Take turns being the engine and the caboose. Place your hands on one child’s shoulders or their hands on your waist and lead the group around the room. Move forwards and backwards as a train and don’t forget to make the train noises.

THINKING SKILLS
Ask the children what they think they would need to fly a kite. Talk about the materials they would use to make their kite and what their kite would look like. Ask them to describe what it would need to be like outside for the kite to fly. Encourage them to tell you how high their kites would go and how they would get there too.

ART
Using construction paper of different colors or white paper that you color together, cut out different shapes. Then, put them together to see what different things you can make. Try making a house, a boat, or a train just like in the book.

PRETEND PLAY
Pretend you are at a carnival and set up carnival games for the children to play. Use clean, empty plastic bottles and set up a bottle toss. Instead of a ball, use a rolled-up sock for them to toss at the bottles. Encourage them to toss a rolled-up sock into a large pot or mixing bowl for another game. Set up an obstacle course for the children to run through using pillows and rolled up blankets too.

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The thing anticipated between sleeping and waking—Dunne's experiments dealt chiefly with the premonitions in the dozing moment between wakefulness and oblivion—need not be just small affairs of tomorrow or next week; they could have a longer range. If, that is, you had the habit of long-range thinking. But these were days when scepticism had to present a hard face to greedy superstition, and it was one's public duty to refrain from rash statements about these flimsy intimations, difficult as they were to distinguish from fantasies except in one's own mind. "There's a lot about the past. With all sorts of things I didn't know and all sorts of gaps filled in. Extraordinary things about North India and Central Asia, for instance. And also—" it goes on. It's going on. The Shape of Things is a 2001 play by American author and film director Neil LaBute and a 2003 American romantic drama film. It premièred at the Almeida Theatre, London in 2001 with Paul Rudd as Adam, Rachel Weisz as Evelyn, Gretchen Mol as Jenny, and Fred Weller as Phillip. The play was directed by LaBute himself. According to the author's instructions, it is to be performed without an interval or a curtain call. The Shape of Things was adapted by LaBute from his stage drama of the same name; a selection of songs by Elvis Costello comprise the soundtrack. Rating: R (for language and some sexuality). When the players themselves are conceived this superficially, LaBute winds up invalidating his own point.