

NUMBERS GAME

10 Tips on honing your child's spatial thinking with building blocks from UVic math professor emeritus Werner Liedtke

1. If you name the blocks, do it right. Don't refer to a cube as a square.
2. Ask your child to build you something fancy -- then something strong. Get them to explain why their construction fits the bill.
3. Build a train of 3-D shapes, having the child explain how each 'car' is different from the next.
4. Buy unpainted wooden blocks with duplicate shapes and various sizes of the same shapes. Coloured blocks distract from the recognition and description of shapes.
5. Avoid right and wrong questions. Ask "what do you think goes here?"
6. Give kids a shape to feel behind their backs and ask "what is it not?"
7. Build a structure and ask your child to duplicate it or make it bigger or smaller.
8. Ask your children to pick the "different" shape from a selection of four and explain their reasoning. You might be surprised.
9. Encourage kids to talk about what they're building.
10. Remember what poet W.B. Yeats once said: "Education is not filling a bucket, but lighting a fire."

Read more:

<http://www.timescolonist.com/life/Building+blocks+math/3716223/story.html#ixzz13VNH48Ky>