

Stringy Loops

Gather together a variety of lengths of string, of at least 3 metres long, each tied into a loop. Chalk and/or a camera would be useful so that you can record the shapes made. A pair of scissors might also come in handy.

Suggest to the children that they find a partner to work with.

Getting Started

See what you can make. You could use both hands.

Tell me about what you've made.

Look at theirs – can you make one like it?

I like the shape you've made.

I wonder how you could change it?

I wonder what you could do next?

Use everyday and/or mathematical language such as 'straight', 'corner', 'bigger', 'side', 'longer', 'triangle' ... to describe the shape and size of flat shapes

Let's look at what happens when we hold it on the ground.

What can we see?

Have you seen this sort of shape before? Where?

How is it the same as/different from others?

Would you like to change your shape in some way? Would you like to make another shape?

Use everyday words to describe position

Join with another pair. Take it in turns to make one shape inside/outside/next to/above/under another.

Explore other ways of working together. Tell me what you've done.

Use developing mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems

How could you make a shape with a different number of corners?

What's the biggest object you can put your string around? What would happen if we joined two or more pieces of string together?

What next?

Use photographs of the string shapes for sorting and matching activities.

<http://nrich.maths.org/2907> (Mrs Trimmer's String)

Possible contexts

Maths outdoors

'Big space' maths

Count reliably up to ten everyday objects

Use language such as more or less to compare two numbers

Does your shape have corners/sides? How many? What do you notice?

Can you fit any children in your shape? If so, how many? If you change your shape, will there be more or fewer children?

In addition to these mathematical observations you will have opportunities to observe other aspects of the EYFS Themes and Commitments. You may like to print off one of the observation sheets an aide, on which you can note down what individual children say and do as they engage with the activity.

Please do send us photos, further suggestions and comments.