Patterns & Puzzles with Nature
for Ages 2–5

Human minds are great at recognizing patterns. In this activity, use natural materials to create patterns and strengthen math skills with your young children.

**ITEMS YOU WILL NEED:**
An outdoor space in nature

**OPTIONAL EXTRAS:**
A table or blanket

1. First, collect a few objects from nature like leaves, sticks, flowers, and rocks. Bring them to a comfortable spot to sit.

2. One by one, show the objects to the child and ask them to find something similar in nature. Do this with each object you collected until you have doubles or triples of each.

3. Dedicate a comfortable space to practice patterns and puzzles with your child. You can use a table or blanket.

4. Help the child to create a simple pattern from the collected objects. A-B patterning is the first step in patterns. Leaf... Flower... Leaf... Flower. A-B patterns are the beginning stage of algebraic thinking in young children.

5. Once your child has mastered A-B patterns, then you can move into A-B-C patterns by adding in a third object. An easy way to add to the fun is by making a simple song from the pattern, singing the order of the objects.

**TO FURTHER EXTEND THIS ACTIVITY:**
Watch a Sesame Street video about patterns for young children or learn about how to help your child count with one to one correspondence.