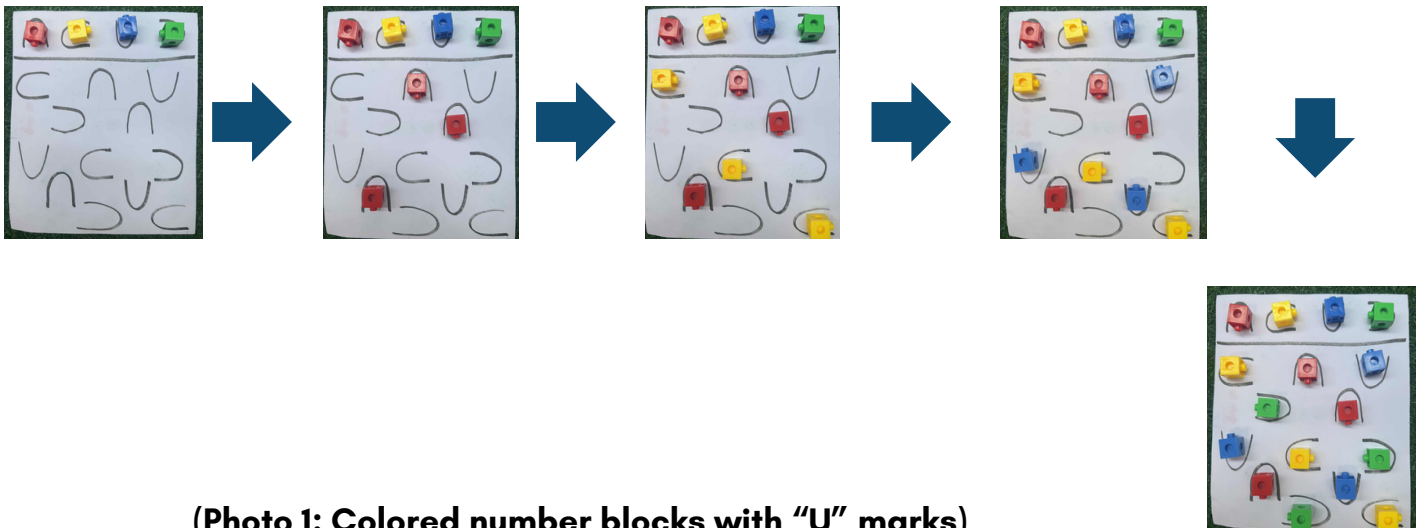# Follow the Pattern

Patterns help kids focus, remember, and plan what comes next (great for pre-math and language). These three games use low-cost, DIY materials you likely already have at home. Keep sessions short, cheerful, and pressure-free. Say the plan ("First game, then snack"), play for a few minutes, cheer small wins, and stop while it's still fun.

Game 1 — Number Block Pattern Copy

(Photo 1: Colored number blocks with "U" marks)

Materials
- 12–16 number blocks or any small colored blocks (red, yellow, blue, green)
- Cardboard or bond paper taped together to make a sturdy board
- Marker/pen and tape

Set-up
1. Draw a grid with two sections:
   - Top row/section: parent makes the pattern model (e.g., red–blue–green–yellow).
   - Bottom grid: left empty for the child to copy.
2. Inside each square, draw a small "U" handle (some facing left, right, or up/down).

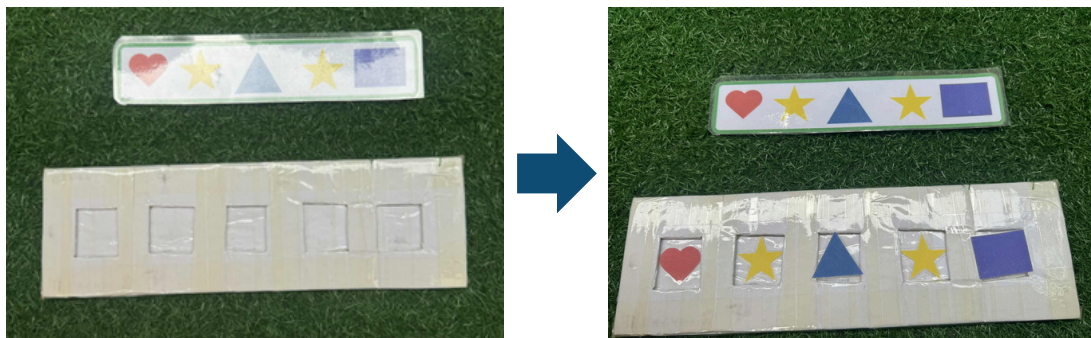## SMALL ROUTINES LEAD TO BIG PROGRESS

How to Play

1. Parent says: "Look at the top row. Let's copy it below."
2. Child places blocks in the empty grid, matching both color AND direction of the "U."
3. Work row by row until the whole lower section is filled.
4. Celebrate: "You followed the pattern! Great job!"

Skills Built

- Pattern recognition (colors + numbers)
- Visual scanning (top → bottom)
- Fine-motor control (rotating cubes to match "U")
- Working memory + copying model (seeing, holding in mind, then placing)

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Game 2 — Shape Match: Follow the Pattern

(Photo 2: Shape Matching)

Materials
- A strip/card with a pattern of shapes (e.g., square → star → triangle → star → heart).
- A board with empty boxes where shapes can be placed.
- Cut-out shapes (laminated if possible for re-use).

How to Set It Up
1. Place the shape pattern strip (the "model") in front of your child.
2. Put the empty box board beside it.
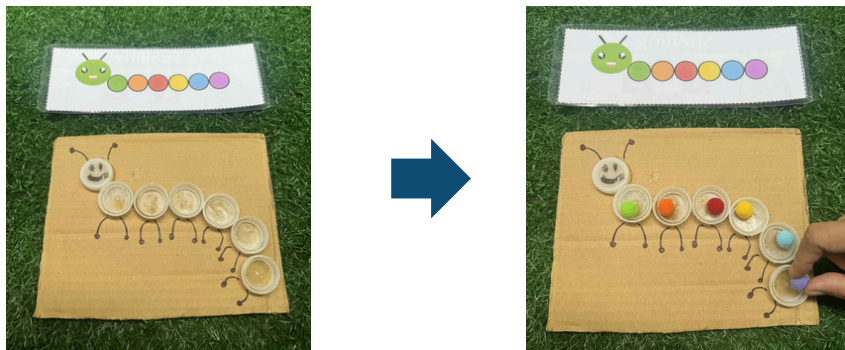3. Lay out the cut-out shapes in a small pile.

SMALL ROUTINES LEAD TO BIG PROGRESS

How to Play

1. Say: "Let's copy the pattern!"
2. Point to the first shape on the strip (e.g., square).
3. Child finds the same shape (square) from the pile.
4. Child places the shape inside the first empty box.
5. Repeat step by step until all boxes are filled in order.

Skills Built

- Visual scanning (left to right).
- Matching and sequencing.
- Fine motor coordination (picking and placing shapes).
- Patience and task completion.

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Game 3 — Caterpillar Color Order

(Photo 3: caterpillar board with bottle-cap "segments" + color pattern)

Materials

- Cardboard ("karton")
- 6–8 clean bottle caps glued in a line/curve (the caterpillar body)
- Pom-poms or paper circles in 6–8 colors
- A small reference strip with the same colors in order (laminate if you can)
- Optional: tweezers/clothespin for a fine-motor challenge

Set-up

1. Draw a happy caterpillar face at one end.
2. Stick the color reference strip beside the board.
3. For the pattern, you can either draw it manually, color it, or print it out.

SMALL ROUTINES LEAD TO BIG PROGRESS

How to Play

1. Say: "Let's feed the caterpillar in this order," and point top→bottom on the color strip.
2. Child picks the first color pom-pom and drops it into the first cap, then the next, and so on.
3. Count or name colors together. Clap at the end and say: "You followed the pattern!"

Skills Built

Color order, top→bottom tracking (pre-reading), pincer grasp (with tweezers), turn-taking language ("my turn/your turn").

Small Routines Lead to Big Progress