

T H E  
**HANDBOOK**  
F O R

Ted E. Bear Presents

# **First Shapes™**

One of the Building Blocks for Learning™ Series

Introduces Young Children  
to Geometric Shapes.



**First Byte®**

THE WORLD'S LEADER IN SOFTWARE SPEECH TECHNOLOGY

**FIRST SHAPES™**

H A N D B O O K

# FIRST SHAPES HANDBOOK

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First Shapes

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## INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! You have just purchased **First Shapes**, an exciting Early Education skill builder that incorporates synthesized speech to increase childrens' ability to learn important beginning concepts about shape and form. **First Shapes™** is the initial title in **First Byte's® Building Blocks for Learning™ Series**.



Meet **Ted E. Bear**. He's a charming, delightful fellow, a talking computer friend who will introduce the children who meet him to the world of geometric shapes. As he takes them through **First Shapes**, the children will play in a rich learning environment in which they use geometric shapes to build toys and help **Ted E. Bear** identify missing shapes and play learning games. Each activity is designed to increase their readiness for mathematics, reading, writing, and problem solving.

Because of the speech capabilities of **Ted E. Bear**, children will be able to participate in **First Shapes'** activities without knowing how to read instructions. They will find the program easy and fun to use. Their lack of dependence on a grown-up reader will increase their self-confidence as an independent learner. As an added feature, the grown-up Helper will be able to put words into **Ted's** mouth so that he makes comments designed for each special child working in **First Shapes**.

This **Handbook** is a guide for you the Helper. It will give you an overview of the educational objectives of **First Shapes**, an introduction to each learning module, and enrichment activities that you can use with your child to reinforce and expand on the concepts learned in **First Shapes**.

## GETTING STARTED

After reading this **Handbook**, play with **First Shapes** yourself. Look at each learning module with your child's skills and interests in mind.

Select the **Helper's Choice** icon (H) in the upper left hand corner of the Main Menu. Enter your child's name to create a **Toy Box** to save toys. If no name is entered, the toys made will be stored in **Ted E. Bear's Toy Box**. Use the other **Helper** options to individualize the learning activities for your child.

Help your child get started by giving an introduction to the Main Menu. Assist when necessary, but encourage your child's independent decision making.



## WHAT CAN YOUR CHILD LEARN BY USING *FIRST SHAPES* ?

***FIRST SHAPES*** will help your child be able to . . .

1. Identify five basic shapes: the square, rectangle, circle, oval, and triangle.
2. Recognize and use words to identify and compare shapes and sizes.
3. Select a missing part to complete a whole object.
4. Use shapes to creatively build objects.
5. Match two shapes that are the same, recalling both the visual object and its location.
6. Solve problems independently.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR YOUR CHILD TO LEARN ABOUT GEOMETRIC SHAPES?

### Learning to identify and use shapes will . . .

**Increase a child's readiness to begin reading and writing.** Everything in a child's world has its own shape, including the letters in the alphabet. All letters are relationships between size and shape. By recognizing and using shapes in two different, but equally important ways, the child begins to relate shape to shape, size to size, and size to shape. Visually, shapes can be identified and manipulated on the computer screen within the **Toy Box** environment. Manually, a child should play with actual shape blocks away from the computer touching, manipulating, and becoming familiar with their characteristics. Both experiences allow the child to easily identify each shape in new situations and see relationships between shape and line. This ability to visually and manually identify and use shapes, transfers to the child's successful activities in recognizing letters and words as well as using a pencil to make them. The speech component of **First Shapes** additionally gives the child the ability to hear and later recall the names of each shape.

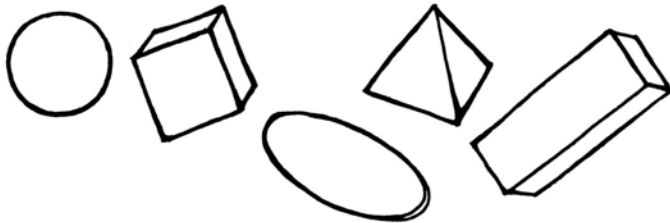
**Increase a child's understanding and interest in mathematics.** Experiences with shape recognition and comparison can help a child form and recognize number symbols as well as the letter symbols previously mentioned. In a larger sense working with and learning about geometric shapes, even at an early age, increases a child's appreciation of form, part to whole relationships, and structure and variety in the world around him. Too often mathematics means only rote learning of basic facts. It is important that the child has the opportunity to develop mathematical concepts through his own experiences. For example, building toys with shapes helps a child draw conclusions about how shapes fit together and can be used to construct a whole object. In a creative atmosphere, **First Shapes** allows a child to learn mathematical ideas, and solve problems that use those ideas.

**Increase a child's confidence in problem solving and independent decision making.** The learning environment created in **First Shapes** uses the vehicle of basic geometric shapes to allow a child to make choices and evaluate decisions. When building toys, the child decides what shape to select for each part of the toy. After the toy is completed, the young toy maker becomes a judge of his/her own work. Any toy can either be thrown out, put in the **Toy Box**, or started over. It is up to each child to make these decisions. The learning environment is carefully built to allow a child to progress comfortably from simply learning to identify shapes to experiences that put the child in charge of how those shapes can be used.

## LEARNING MODULES

### SHAPES

This learning module is the natural first step into **First Shapes**. It is designed for the child who is just beginning to recognize shapes and needs some practice and play before going on to larger projects. Each of the five shapes are presented one at a time. When the child or Helper clicks on **Ted E. Bear**, the name of the shape displayed is said and the word appears on the screen. By selecting the "Bigger" or "Smaller" boxes the same shape can change in size. Helpers and children can use this module to practice identifying shapes and talking about what they look like. "What do you see?" "How many sides does a square have?" "How many corners do you see?" "Let's see how many square shapes we can find in this room?"



## THE TOY FACTORY

In this module, the child uses the now familiar shapes to build toys to store in a private **Toy Box**. Each child can choose shapes to construct variations of many different toys. "What shape would you like for the robot's arms?" "What shape should the robot's head be?" Many different robots could be constructed depending on the choices made. After the toy is finished, the toy maker becomes a critic, able to decide if the toy should be stored in the **Toy Box**. Each toy is given a name and the child is able to view exactly how it was built. In addition, each toy can be printed out and displayed for everyone to see.

### THE TOY BOX

Each child has their own **Toy Box** for storing toys made in the **Toy Factory**. By selecting this module, the toy maker can open the **Toy Box** and look at each toy. If the child decides a toy should leave the **Toy Box**, it can be taken out to make room for other toys. The toy maker can also use the "Print" Box to make a paper copy of each toy.



## THE TOY FAIR

Each child can visit the **Toy Fair** with **Ted E. Bear** and help him win arcade games and take a balloon ride. By finding the shape **Ted E. Bear** is looking for, every child is a winner. Selecting the largest circle, the pointed shape, the smallest triangle, and many other specified shapes, the learner will be able to identify qualified shapes, compare objects, and become familiar with descriptive vocabulary words.

## MAKE-A-MATCH GAME

The **Make-a-Match Game** is designed to help children compare shapes and objects deciding if they are the same or different. In turning over **Ted E. Bear** cards the child tries to make shape and toy matches until all the cards are face up. To accomplish this, the child must not only recognize "a match" but also recall each object's location in order to find it again. There are three levels of difficulty to allow for each child's learning rate. A child can also choose to play "By Myself," "With a Friend," or against **Ted E. Bear**. **Ted E. Bear** can be "Silly," "Smart," or "Very Smart."

## For the Helper . . . THE HELPER'S CHOICE

**First Shapes** allows you, the Helper, to "tailor make" the program for the child using it. By clicking on the **H for Helper** on the Main Menu, a number of program controls are at your command. You can change the speech controls, insert the learner's name, set your own reinforcement messages, and make learning modules active or inactive.

Your role as a Helper is very important in determining the learning impact of a program like **First Shapes**. After you help your children get started, it is important to encourage their independent use of the program. However, also use the learning activities as an opportunity for you to play and work together. For example, you can ask leading questions that encourage the building of concepts. "How did you know that was the biggest circle?" "How is a triangle different from the square?" Most important, your encouragement and praise will make a large contribution toward each child's enjoyment of learning new things and self confidence in solving problems. Provide ample opportunities for toy makers to share their work with family and friends.

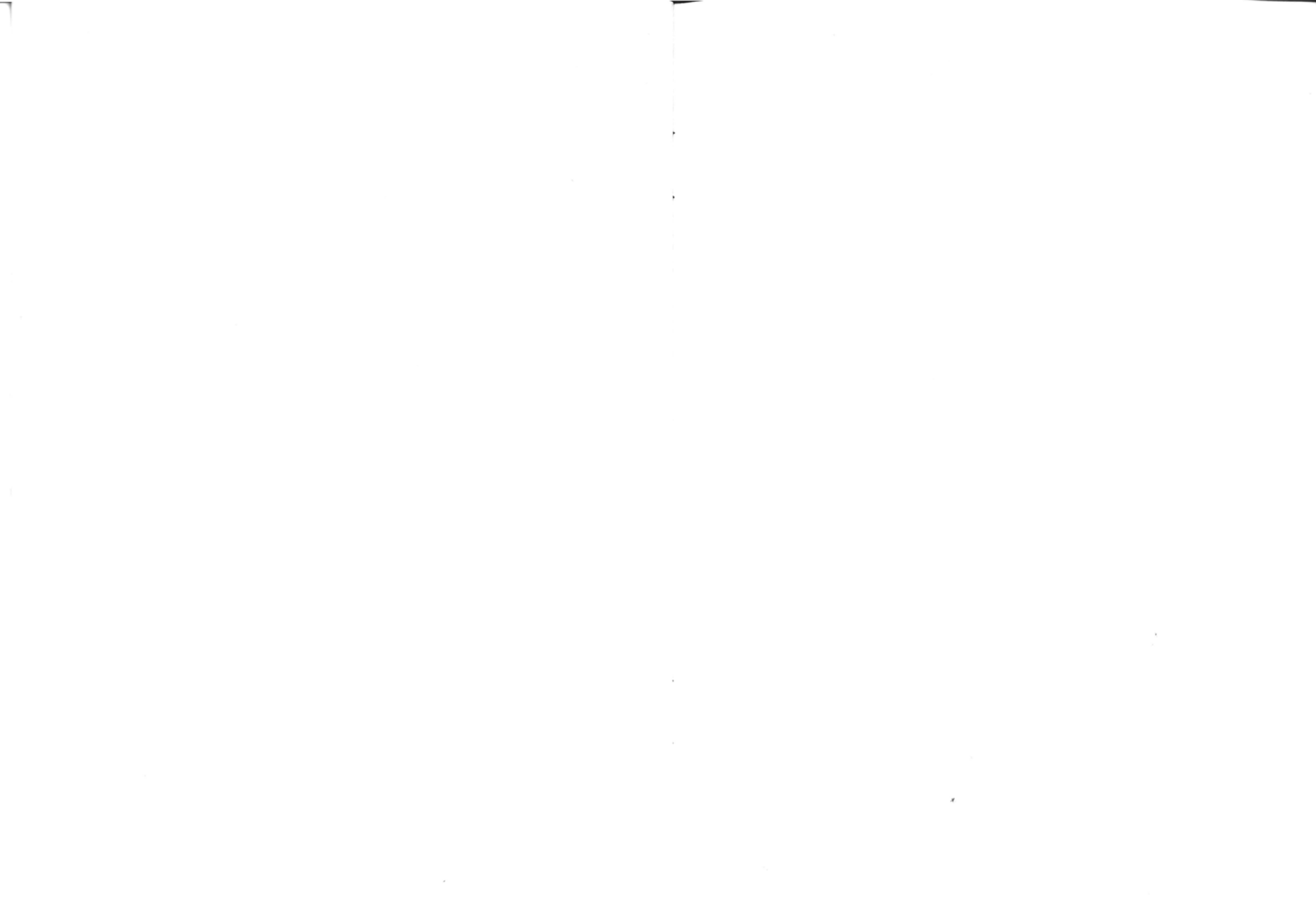
## EXTRA LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Draw pictures on paper that consist of geometric shapes like a circle sun, a triangular roof, or a rectangular boat. Challenge your child to find the shapes you specify and color them. Then let the children draw their own pictures and ask you to find the shapes.
- Make masks with construction paper by cutting out shapes for the facial features. Make a triangle monster or a circle bear face!
- Play a "find the shape" game in many different locations including your child's bedroom, the grocery store, the park, and the kitchen.
- Make shapes on paper by tracing objects around the house. Trace around a glass and make a circle or use the bottom of the cereal box to make a rectangle.
- Use objects like straws, pencils, or toothpicks to construct shapes. This will help you ask your child important questions that they can find answers to by their own experience. How many sides does a triangle have? How many corners? Is each side the same size? Are all the sides of a rectangle the same? Which sides are longer? How is a rectangle different than a square?
- Look at patterns that are made from shapes. Good examples to use are quilts and stained glass windows. Let your child make a pattern by repeating shapes in a set order.
- Take children to the art museum and look for shapes in the paintings and sculptures. They will see how artists use shape in their work and it will increase their interest in starting their own projects.
- Demonstrate to your child how some shapes are "flat" like the ones used in **First Shapes** while others are not. Introduce shapes like boxes, and balls, and cubes that have volume.
- Folding paper, napkins, or cloth is a good way to demonstrate how shapes relate to each other. What happens when you fold a rectangle in half? Is it still a rectangle? Can you fold a square and make a triangle?

- Children enjoy making their bodies into shapes. Challenge your child to become a rectangle or to make a circle shape only using arms. It's also exciting to make letter shapes bringing in friends and other family members to help out. Who's going to dot the i?
- Help your child learn about "open" and "closed" shapes. All of the 5 shapes used in **First Shapes** are closed shapes. They start and stop at the same point. There are many more closed shapes that can be made. Have your child start drawing a line on paper and move the pencil until the point is back to where it started. This is a "closed" shape. Now try drawing an "open" shape. To extend this activity, look at the letters of the alphabet. Some are closed shapes like the letter O. Others are open shapes like the letter C. Some are a combination of both.
- To reinforce each of the five shapes presented in **First Shapes**, help your child find examples of these shapes in their environment. For example, a watermelon, a rubber band, an egg, or some rugs on the floor, are ovals. Windows, flags, and books can be rectangles. Handkerchiefs, some boxes, and checkerboards are squares. There are unlimited possibilities when you look at objects like signs, buildings, toys, and trees.

- Encourage your child to play with puzzles that use primary shapes to build a whole picture.
- Use stencils to trace shapes on construction paper. Cut them out and use them to build pictures.
- Playing with all types of blocks is very important. Besides giving your child ample time to sort shapes and build with them, spend time sitting with your child playing and talking about the shapes and building projects. A child's ability to verbalize their thoughts, ask questions, and respond to the discovery enhancing questions you can ask, helps them form concepts and increases their understanding.







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