Patterns are everywhere, and you can give your child opportunities to create and play with them. After all, a pattern is as easy as something that repeats more than once—like red, blue, red, blue, red, blue. Thinking about patterns helps children make sense of math; it helps them predict what will happen. After just a bit of practice, you’ll be amazed at how often your child will find patterns that you don’t even see!

IN THE BEDROOM

- When folding laundry with your child, make a pattern with socks. Line them up like this: big, small, big, small, big, small. Then, have fun matching the pairs of socks together.

- Help your child lay out a pattern with her toys—a book, stuffed animal, block, book, stuffed animal, block, etc. Then count the number of toys all together and repeat the last number as you say, “So we have (total number of) toys on the floor.”

AT PLAYTIME

- Help your child make a pattern with his crayons. Place one pointing up, the next pointing down, etc. As you make the pattern, ask, “What comes next?”

- String pieces of macaroni into a beautiful patterned necklace. Place a big piece, another big piece, and then a small piece on the string. Repeat with more big, big, small pieces to create a pattern. When the necklace is complete, count the number of “beads” on the necklace.

- Grow a pattern! Put one object on the table. Below that object, put another object on the table and have your child place one object next to it. Below that row, put two objects in a row, then ask your child to add one more to the row. Below that row, put three objects in a row, then have your child add one more. Ask, “How many do you think will be in the next row? Let’s find out!”

This tipsheet is an excerpt from “Talking is Teaching: Let’s Talk About Math,” a fun filled activity book to introduce early math concepts and words to your child, available at talkingisteaching.org/highlights-math-guide.