

## Repeat, then Eat!: A Patterning Game

This incredibly edible activity gives kindergarteners the chance to practice identifying, copying, and extending basic patterns. Sure it's fun (and delicious!) but it also helps kids lay the foundation for math, reading, and other curriculum cornerstones. Patterning teaches kindergarteners to look for what's the same and what's different, in addition to the order, or sequence, things occur. And when everything's edible, the learning feels like play!

### What You Need:

- Small edible snacks that are similar in color or shape and easy to handle, such as M&M's, trail mix, dried fruit mix, colored fruit snacks, mixed cereal, colored goldfish crackers, or carrot and celery sticks



### What You Do:

1. Build a simple pattern on the table. Let's say you use M&M's. Start with an alternating pattern (called an AB pattern): one red candy, one green candy, one red, one green, and so forth. Be sure to repeat the pattern at least once.
2. Call your kid over. Tell him you've set the candies up in a pattern and challenge him to figure out what it is.
3. Get your kid in on the action! Ask him to copy the pattern, by building a sequence that's exactly like yours. Then ask him to explain how he did it, with questions like: "How did you know to start with a red?" or "Why did you use a green here?"
4. Ask your child to extend, or add more to the pattern. Again, ask him to explain why he chose to use certain colors or shapes.
5. Finally, ask your child to tell what part of the sequence was repeated in this pattern. For example, say, "What colors did we repeat?" (Red, then green.) Here are some more difficult patterns to practice once he's mastered the AB pattern: AAB, ABB, AABB, and ABC.

This activity is even more fun with a catchphrase. I always end things by saying, "Patterns: we repeat and then we eat!" Be good to your word. Once the learning's over, let your child scoop up his lesson and eat away! And don't worry, when the snack monster strikes again, you can pick up where you left off. Happy eating!