

We Skoolhouse



Ready-Made Curriculum: **Circles, Spirals, Spots, & Dots**



Introduction: Circles, Spirals, Spots, & Dots

This month-long unit invites children into a playful and intentional investigation of circles, spirals, spots, and dots. These simple yet powerful forms are found everywhere—in nature, in culture, in the human body, and in the marks children make each day. Through observation, movement, construction, drawing, storytelling, and sensory exploration, children will uncover the functions and meanings of these shapes in their world.

Children will begin with a foundational curiosity: Where do we find circles? What do they do? What do they feel like? As the unit unfolds, they will discover how circles grow, spin, roll, radiate, and repeat. Spirals will introduce ideas of movement and patterns in nature. Dots and spots will become invitations to explore identity, pattern-making, and artistic expression.

The activities and suggestions included are not directives, but invitations—ways to meet all learners without pressure or expectation. Avoid directing or redirecting. Trust in each child's natural drive to explore, and allow learning to unfold with authenticity and joy.

This guide includes daily prompts, journal ideas, suggested vocabulary, recommended books, and ways to incorporate the unit into centers. Use what fits, adjust what's needed, and let the children lead the way.

Books Used Throughout the Unit:

- Swirl by Swirl: Spirals in Nature by Joyce Sidman
- The Dot by Peter H. Reynolds
- Round is a Mooncake by Roseanne Thong
- The Circles All Around Us by Brad Montague
- Yayoi Kusama: From Here to Infinity by Fausto Gilberti

Vocabulary

circle, dot, spot, spiral, swirl, round, curve, edge, loop, roll, spin, twirl, rotate, orbit, radiate, expand, pattern, repeat, layer, overlap, stamp, trace, balance, symmetry, surround, frame, observe, include, represent, connect, design, emotion, expression

Week 1: Circles Are Everywhere

Focus Concept: Children begin to observe and explore circles in their environment, recognizing their shape, function, and presence in nature, objects, and relationships.

Weekly Objective: Children will identify and describe circles through hands-on exploration, construction, and reflection, building personal and collective meaning around the shape.

Monday – Introducing Circles

Morning Meeting

- Read *The Circles All Around Us* by Brad Montague.
 - Begin a collaborative chart “Where We Find Circles.”
- Discussion Prompts:
 - What makes a circle a circle?
 - Where have you seen circles before?
 - Can a circle change size and still be a circle?

Follow-Up Investigation

- Circle Hunt – Children use clipboards, magnifying glasses, & markers to record circles found inside/outside.
- Provide printed guides, image cards, or a checklist depending on developmental level.
- Encourage children to photograph or sketch what they find.

Closing Circle

- Review the group circle chart and add new ideas. Invite children to share one circle they saw today. Continue to add to the chart or “wonder wall” throughout the study.



Tuesday – Building with Cirlces

Morning Meeting

- Read The Circles All Around Us again, focusing on how circles grow and connect.
 - Display real objects (e.g., wheel, bracelet, drum, cup, plate).
- Discussion Prompts:
 - What do circles help us do?
 - Which of these do you think will roll?
 - What happens when you stack circles?

Follow-Up Investigation

- Constructing with Circles — Provide paper cups, lids, rings, bowls, and other round items. Encourage children to build freely using these materials.
- Optional Journal Prompt: "Draw what you made with the circle materials."

Closing Circle

- Reflect: "What was tricky about working with round things? What made it fun?"



Wednesday – Circles in Culture and Design

Morning Meeting

- Read Round is a Mooncake by Roseanne Thong.
- Discussion prompts:
 - Do you eat anything shaped like a circle?
 - What's something round you use at home?

Follow-Up Investigation

- Circle Collage — Provide precut paper circles of varying size and color. Children layer and glue the circles to create a visual composition. Some may explore symmetry or patterning.
- Journal prompt: "My collage is made of..." or "I used mostly ___ color circles." Children may describe what their design reminds them of.

Closing Circle

- Reflect: "How do circles change when we add more? What does your collage remind you of?"



Thursday – Family Circles

Morning Meeting

- Book: The Circles All Around Us
- Discussion prompts:
 - “Who is in your family circle?”
 - What makes your family feel connected?

Follow-Up Investigation

- Family Circle Frames — Provide cardboard circles, glue, collage materials, and printed family photos or invite children to draw their families.
- Journal prompt: “My family circle has...” or “When I see my family, I feel...”

Closing Circle

- Children share one person in their circle and how they help them feel safe or loved.



Friday – Our Community Circle

Morning Meeting

- Read The Circles All Around Us one final time.
- Reflect as a class: How do circles grow to include others?
- Discussion Prompts:
 - What circles are we part of (family, class, friends)?
 - Can our classroom be one big circle?

Follow-Up Investigation

- Community Circle Mural — Provide a large piece of butcher paper. Each child adds and decorates within a circle to represent themselves using drawing, collage, or paint. They choose one word about themselves to write or dictate next to their circle.
- Journal prompt: “My circle shows...” or “I am part of our class circle because...”

Closing Circle

- Stand together in a physical circle. Sing a closing song or gratitude chant. Invite children to share one thing they learned about circles this week.
 - Optional Closing Song: “We Are a Circle” (Original, to the tune of “Frère Jacques”)
We are a circle, we are a circle
Round and strong, round and strong
We hold one another, we care for each other
All day long, all day long

*We Skoolhouse does not own the rights to these lyrics**

Week 2: Spirals in Nature and Motion

Focus Concept: Children explore the spiral as a form found in nature, art, and movement. Spirals introduce the idea of motion, growth, and change through continuous form and pattern.

Weekly Objective: Children will identify spirals in the environment, explore how they move, and use the spiral form to create marks, structures, and representations in art and sensory experiences.

Monday – Discovering Spirals

Morning Meeting

- Book: Swirl by Swirl: Spirals in Nature by Joyce Sidman. Examine real-life spiral photos (snail shells, ferns, storms).
- Discussion Prompts:
 - What does a spiral look like?
 - Where do you think spirals live?
 - Do spirals stay still or move?

Follow-Up Investigation

- Spirals in Sand and Loose Parts – Set up a shallow tray of sand with loose parts nearby (shells, buttons, stones, caps). Offer a stick to draw spirals in the sand and create spiral-inspired designs with the materials.
- Journals prompt: Draw a spiral you saw or made today. Prompt: “My spiral reminds me of...”

Closing Circle

- Reflect: “Did your spiral feel calm, fast, slow, big?”
Talk about how spirals feel to draw or follow.



Tuesday – Drawing with Spirals

Morning Meeting

- Book: Read Swirl by Swirl again. Review images of spiral movement and flow.
- Discussion Prompts:
 - What makes a spiral different from a circle?
 - Can you move your finger in a spiral?

Follow-Up Investigation

- Tracing Spirals with Loose Parts – Tape down large paper with hand-drawn spirals. Provide a tray of loose parts (pom-poms, pebbles, shells) to trace the lines.
- Journal prompt: “What did you use to fill your spiral?” or “My spiral made me feel...”

Closing Circle

- Invite children to reflect on how spirals change depending on the size or shape of their materials.



Wednesday – Spirals in Motion

• Morning Meeting

- Book: Read Swirl by Swirl
- Watch a few short videos or animations of spirals in motion (e.g., snails, whirlpools, galaxies).
- Discussion Prompts:
 - Can you move your body like a spiral?
 - What do you notice about how spirals spin?
 - Do they always look the same?

Follow-Up Investigation

- Spiral Dancing + Spin Art – Begin with a spiral dance activity using scarves and circular movements.
- Optional extension: offer a spin art station with salad spinners, paper, and paint.
- Journal prompt: Draw or describe your spinning art or movement.

Closing Circle

- Talk about how it felt to spin or swirl. Was it fun? Dizzy? Beautiful?



Thursday – Spiral Tools

Morning Meeting

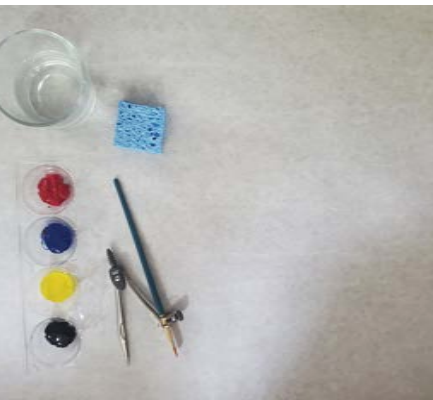
- Read: Round is a Mooncake
- Revisit spiral imagery. Introduce a drawing compass as a tool that can make circular and spiral designs.
- Discussion Prompts:
 - How are spirals and circles similar/different?
 - What tools help us make spirals or circles?
 - Can a spiral have more than one color?

Follow-Up Investigation:

- Compass Painting – Attach a paintbrush to a drawing compass. Offer trays of tempera paint and let children explore how spirals can form through tool use and motion.
- Journal prompt: “My spiral painting looks like...” or “I used ___ colors in my spiral.”

Closing Circle

- Reflect: “What did you notice when using a compass?”



Friday – Spirals In & Around Us

Morning Meeting

- Read: Swirl by Swirl one final time.
- Discussion Prompts:
 - What is your favorite kind of spiral?
 - Can a spiral grow forever?

Follow-Up Investigation

- Spiral Nature Mandala – Offer a variety of natural loose parts - that children can help collect (pinecones, seeds, flower petals, stones). Invite children to build a large spiral together (inside or outside) as a collaborative mandala.
- Journal prompt: Draw the class spiral. Prompt: “We made our spiral with...” or “Our spiral made me think of...”

Closing Circle

- Stand in a spiral formation. Reflect on what spirals taught us.



Week 3: Dots, Spots, and Patterns

Focus Concept: Children explore the smallest forms of circular design—dots and spots—and how they are used to create repetition, texture, identity, and expression.

Weekly Objective: Children will explore how dots and spots can be used in art, nature, and self-expression. Through stamping, sticking, painting, and layering, they will build awareness of repetition, texture, and individuality.

Monday – Exploring Dots

Morning Meeting

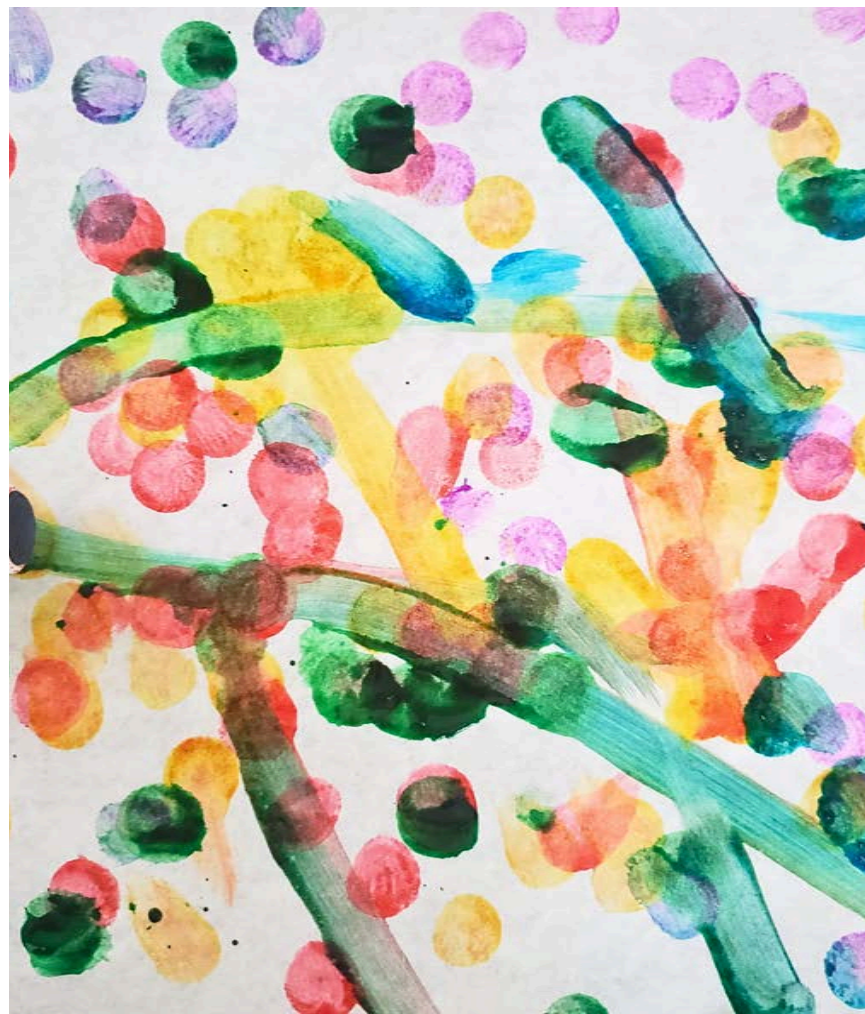
- Book: The Dot by Peter H. Reynolds. Reflect on how a single dot can start a creative journey.
- Discussion Prompts:
 - What is a dot?
 - Can a dot be big or small?
 - How does a dot become art?

Follow-Up Investigation

- Dot Marker Exploration – Provide dot markers and sheets of paper for stamping, pressing, layering, and experimenting (can be collaborative or individual experience).
- Journals prompt: “My favorite way to use the dot marker was...” or “My paper is full of...”

Closing Circle

- Reflect: Ask children what they noticed when using the dot markers. Were all the dots the same?



Tuesday - Dots in the World

Morning Meeting

- Read Yayoi Kusama: From Here to Infinity by Fausto Gilberti. Look at photos of Kusama's dot rooms and sculptures.
- Discussion Prompts:
 - Why do you think Yayoi used so many dots?
 - How do her dots make you feel?
 - Can you cover everything with dots?

Follow-Up Investigation

- Obliteration Station – Cover a portion of the classroom (walls, table, floor) in white butcher paper. Offer sheets of dot stickers and invite children to decorate the space like Kusama.

Closing Circle

- Step back and observe the sticker-covered space. Ask: What changed? How does it feel to walk through something YOU helped create?



Wednesday – Making Dots with Tools

Morning Meeting

- Read The Dot. Introduce hole punchers and dot markers or q-tips (optional) as tools that can create dots in different ways.
- Discussion Prompts:
 - Can dots make a picture?

Follow-Up Investigation

- Hole Punch + Dot Collage – Provide several hole punchers, strips of construction paper and other fabrics, glue, and containers for collecting punched dots. Children create dot-based artwork. You can also add dot markers to the station as well.
- Journal prompt: "I made my picture with dots by..." or "I used ___ dots to make..."

Closing Circle

Reflect on using tools to make dots. Ask: "Which tool was easiest? Hardest? Most fun?"



Thursday - Patterns with Dots

Morning Meeting

- Book: The Dot
- Look at dot patterns in clothing, animals (ladybugs, cheetahs), and fabric. Introduce pointillism art.
- Discussion Prompts:
 - Where do you see dots in real life?
 - What makes something a pattern?
 - Can dots be part of a story?

Follow-Up Investigation

- Q-tip Dot Painting – Offer paint palettes and Q-tips for creating repeating dots in rows, curves, or shapes. Encourage exploration of color and size.
- Journal prompt: “My dots made a...” or “I saw a pattern of...”

Closing Circle

- Reflect: “What did your dots turn into?”



Friday – Dots That Represent Me

Morning Meeting

- Book: Yayoi Kusama. Discuss how dots can say something about us.
- Discussion Prompts:
 - What do your dots say about you?
 - Can a dot show a feeling?
 - What would it mean to give someone a dot?

Follow-Up Investigation

- Dot Portrait or Dot Name Art – Children create their own name or portrait using q-tips, paint, or drawing to represent themselves. You may provide small mirrors for self-portrait inspo! Optional: Add to a wall or hallway board.

Closing Circle

- Stand in a circle and hold up finished dots. Reflect: “How are our dots different? How are they the same?”



Week 4: Circles with Meaning - Art, Emotion, & Identity

Focus Concept: Children reflect on circles as a personal, emotional, and symbolic form.

Weekly Objective: Children will use circles to express ideas, feelings, and identity through guided and open-ended art experiences. They will explore how circles connect to imagination and storytelling.

Monday – Circles That Represent Me

Morning Meeting

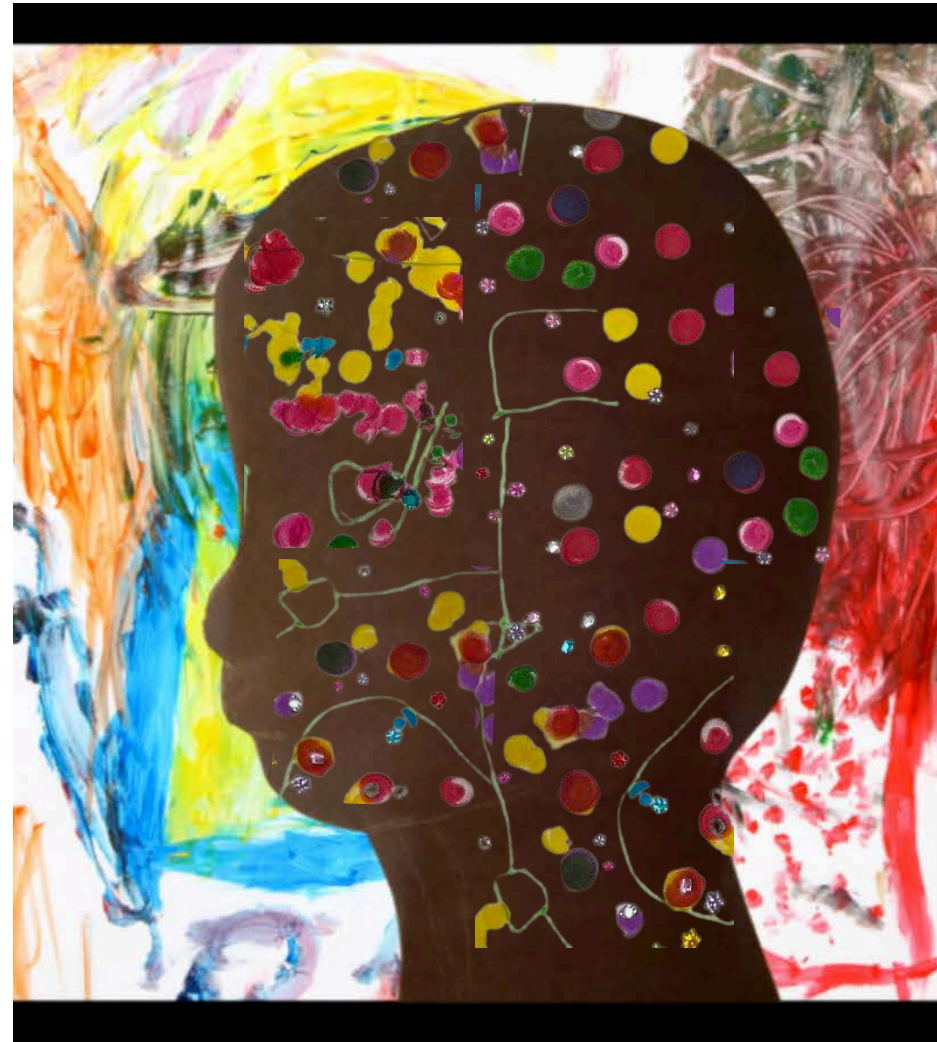
- Book: Yayoi Kusama: From Here to Infinity. Discuss how Kusama used dots and circles to express feelings and patterns inside her.
- Discussion Prompts:
 - Can circles show feelings?

Follow-Up Investigation

- Sticker Dot Portraits – Children fill a silhouette of their head or circle template with dot stickers or paint to express themselves.
- Journal prompt: "My circles shows..." or "I made these circles to show..."

Closing Circle:

- Gallery walk. Ask: "How are our circles alike? How are they different?"



Tuesday - Circles in Abstract Art

Morning Meeting

- Book: Yayoi Kusama
 - Introduce the work of artist Wassily Kandinsky. Show "Squares with Concentric Circles" for comparisons.
- Discussion Prompts:
 - What do you notice in his art?
 - How is it similar/different to Yayoi Kusama?

Follow-Up Investigation

- Kandinsky-Inspired Circles – Children glue layered circles onto square backgrounds. Offer collage materials, cut paper, and drawing tools.
- Journals prompt: My art reminds me of..." or "I used ___ colors because..."

Closing Circle

- Reflect on how it felt to layer and design.



Wednesday – Circles in Circles

Morning Meeting

- Book: The Circles All Around Us. Focus on how circles can be part of each other—circles inside circles, growing and connected.
- Discussion Prompts:
 - What happens when we put circles inside other circles?
 - How many circles can fit inside one ring?

Follow-Up Investigation

- Circles in Circles Loose Parts Play – Provide wooden or metal rings in various sizes. Offer a variety of small loose parts (buttons, shells, coins, gems, pompoms) and invite children to fill and arrange within the rings.

Closing Circle

- Invite children to describe how they arranged their materials. Ask: "What did you notice when you added more circles?"



Thursday - Our Circle of Kindness

Morning Meeting

- Book: Read The Circles All Around Us one more time. Focus on how circles can grow to include others.
- Discussion Prompts:
 - Who is in your circle?
 - Can you give someone a circle with kindness?

Follow-Up Investigation

- Community Kindness Circles – Invite children to make and decorate paper circles with kind messages or pictures. Deliver to friends, staff, or neighbors, or hang as a kindness chain.
- Journals prompt: “I made a circle for...” or “My kindness circle shows...”

Closing Circle

- Reflect on how giving makes them feel.



Friday – Final Circle Celebration

Morning Meeting

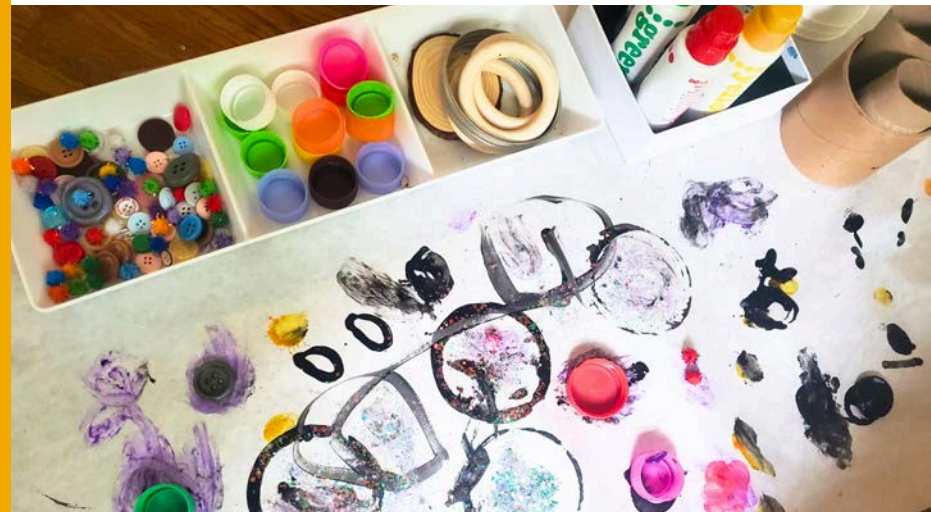
- Review all the books and ideas explored this month. Ask: What did we learn from circles, spirals, spots, and dots?
- Discussion Prompts:
 - What was your favorite kind of circle?
 - What did circles teach you about yourself?
 - Anything else you still wonder?

Follow-Up Investigation

- Circle Collage Celebration – Revisit all materials used throughout the unit (dot markers, paint, cut paper, stamps, glue, natural items). Invite children to create a final collage.

Closing Circle

- Stand in a physical circle. Reflect: “We are each a circle & together we are a community.”



About Centers, Provocations, and Materials

The following center setups and materials are designed to support the investigation across the unit. The intention is not to do everything at once—but to select, rotate, and adapt based on the children's interests, developmental needs, and the rhythm of the group.

These ideas should be seen as options to choose from, not a checklist to complete. Overloading the space with too many choices can overwhelm young children. Instead, offer a small number of materials at a time, and observe how children engage with them before introducing more.

You might choose to:

- Keep certain materials consistent for multiple weeks to allow for repetition and mastery.
- Rotate in new elements slowly to spark renewed interest or deeper thinking.
- Modify invitations to become more complex or more accessible as needed.

Children should be welcomed to:

- Make choices about how and where they work within the classroom.
- Move materials between areas (when appropriate) to support their ideas or projects.
- Combine materials across centers to create more layered and meaningful representations.
- Take responsibility for the tools they use by helping to return them when finished.

While autonomy is encouraged, a sense of shared care and responsibility is expected. In all cases, the role of the adult is to:

- Observe how materials are used and what thinking is emerging.
- Document children's approaches, choices, and discoveries.
- Decide when to step back, when to scaffold, and when to offer something new.





Sensory Table

Purpose: Invite tactile exploration and fine motor patterning using circular and spiral elements. Children engage their senses by scooping, spiraling, tracing, and creating radial designs using curved tools and textured round objects.

Materials & Setup Options:

- Sand tray with various round objects; wooden or metal rings, pom-poms, cups, wood slices, spiral sticks, bottlecaps, buttons, shells, etc.
- Waterbeads (also known as orbeez) with accessories for scooping, pouring, and filling (cups, bowls, spoons, funnels, etc.)
- Circular pasta (dried), bottle caps, wooden rings for scooping and sorting
- Spiral pipe cleaners and coiled ribbons mixed with soft fabrics

Notes:

Consider rotating in kinetic sand or colored rice. Offer small cups or trays to fill and pour.

Dramatic Play

Purpose:

Support storytelling, role play, and cultural exploration using circle-related materials. Through pretend scenarios involving circles—like donuts, pizzas, or polka dots—children build language, cooperation, and symbolic representation.

Materials & Setup Options:

- Polka-dot scarves, circular plates and cookware, round pretend food
- Set up a pretend “donut shop,” “pizza place,” or “circle bakery”
- Include baskets for sorting spotted or round costume items
- Add dot-themed invitations like “Design a circle party” or “Decorate with spots!”

Notes:

Rotate costumes and materials based on children's ideas. Add labeled bins for sorting circular props.

Science & Discovery Center

Purpose: Support experimentation, observation, and comparison of shape, movement, and design in natural and constructed circles.

Materials & Setup Options:

- Circle Collecting Station: Magnifying glasses, trays of found or natural circular items (seeds, shells, rings, buttons, bottle caps, wooden coins).
- Rolling Ramp Test Zone: Provide ramps and a variety of round and non-round objects. Include prediction sheets: “Will it roll?”
- Mirror & Light Exploration: Small mirrors, flashlights, and round translucent objects to observe circular reflections, shadows, and color mixing.
- Spiral Nature Table: Display snail shells, pinecones, fern fronds, and spiral images with magnifiers and sketch paper.

Notes: Add vocabulary cards (circle, round, curve, spiral, roll, reflect, shadow, spin). Include clipboards or simple labeling materials.



Art Studio

Purpose: Encourage creative expression, pattern-making, layering, and symbolic use of shape.

Materials & Setup Options:

- Dot markers, oil pastels, glue sticks, round stampers
- Precut paper circles in varying sizes and textures
- Loose parts for mandalas: buttons, glass gems, dried beans, tissue paper circles
- Paint trays with circle sponges, lids, rollers
- Mirror trays for symmetrical circle drawing or dot face designs
- Spirograph exploration: place down the different spirograph wheels and coloring utensils.



Notes: Include photos of artists like Yayoi Kusama or Kandinsky. Offer prompts like "What can a circle be?" or "What's inside your circle?"

Blocks and Construction

Purpose:

Encourage engineering, balance, and observation of form using nontraditional building shapes. Children experiment with how round objects balance, roll, or stack, and observe the properties of curved versus angular structures.

Materials & Setup Options:

- Paper cups, rings, lids, tubes, and round boxes
- Clear trays to organize by size or material
- Add mirrors or platforms to view circular builds from above
- Include small dolls or figures for added imaginative play

Notes:

Document builds and invite children to describe what worked or didn't. Add signs like "Can you make a circle tower?" or "How tall can you stack the cups?" You may add some circular structures like the Guggenheim for inspiration.

Literacy Center

Purpose:

Promote vocabulary development, sequencing, and symbolic representation using shape-based books and materials. Children explore stories that celebrate circles and dots, build shape vocabulary, and create their own stories through stamps, drawings, or writing prompts.

Materials & Setup Options:

- Shape-focused books: The Dot, Round is a Mooncake, Ten Black Dots
- Letter and shape tracing cards with circular patterns
- Stamp pads and circle stamps for name or word building
- Story stones with painted dots and spirals to spark storytelling

Notes:

- Add journals or blank books for "circle stories." Include conversation starters: "What happens in your circle?"



"The Circle is the oldest form of unity."
— Carl Jung