Math Activities

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Math Concepts:

- geometric shapes
- linear measurement
- size

Geometric Shapes

Make shapes with wire. Have students design shapes first on a geoboard with rubber bands, then transfer the shape to wire. (See geoboard pattern on next page.) Discuss the characteristics of different shapes and the names of the shapes. Working with partners or small groups, students can think of ways they can combine their shapes to form an object. Have students describe how the parts of the object fit together, using the names of the shapes and their characteristics.

Perimeter and Area

Give each student a piece of wire that is the same length. Ask them to make a closed shape that has the largest amount of space inside the wire (area). Working with an alternative measurement tool, such as pinto beans, have them estimate the perimeter and then measure it. Have them compare their estimates with the actual measurements and compare their measurements with each other. What can they conclude about the perimeter and the shape? Have them estimate how many beans will fill the inside of the shape. Then fill the shape with beans and count them. Compare estimates with actual count. Again, what do they notice about the number of beans (the area) in the different shapes they created? (For students who are not yet working with subtraction, they might designate “higher,” “lower,” or “same” when comparing their estimates with actual measurements.)

Do-at-Home Activity

Have students search for as many different types of wire as they can find in and around the house and make a list. In addition to obvious wires, remind parents of such items as paper clips, twisty ties, staples, earring wires, and the like. Encourage them to discuss attributes of the wires they find, including thickness and length. Have the children bring one piece of wire to school and compare their findings.