

Sascha, Pattern blocks, Emily

Creating a Learning Story

This document presents the raw documentation consisting of five images of an event one day with the words spoken by the child, Sascha, who is five years old.

Then we see the process for converting this raw data into a Learning Story.



Documentation

Sascha says, “I am making it the same on both sides.”



Documentation

Sascha says, “It looks like Rafiki from the Lion King.”



Documentation

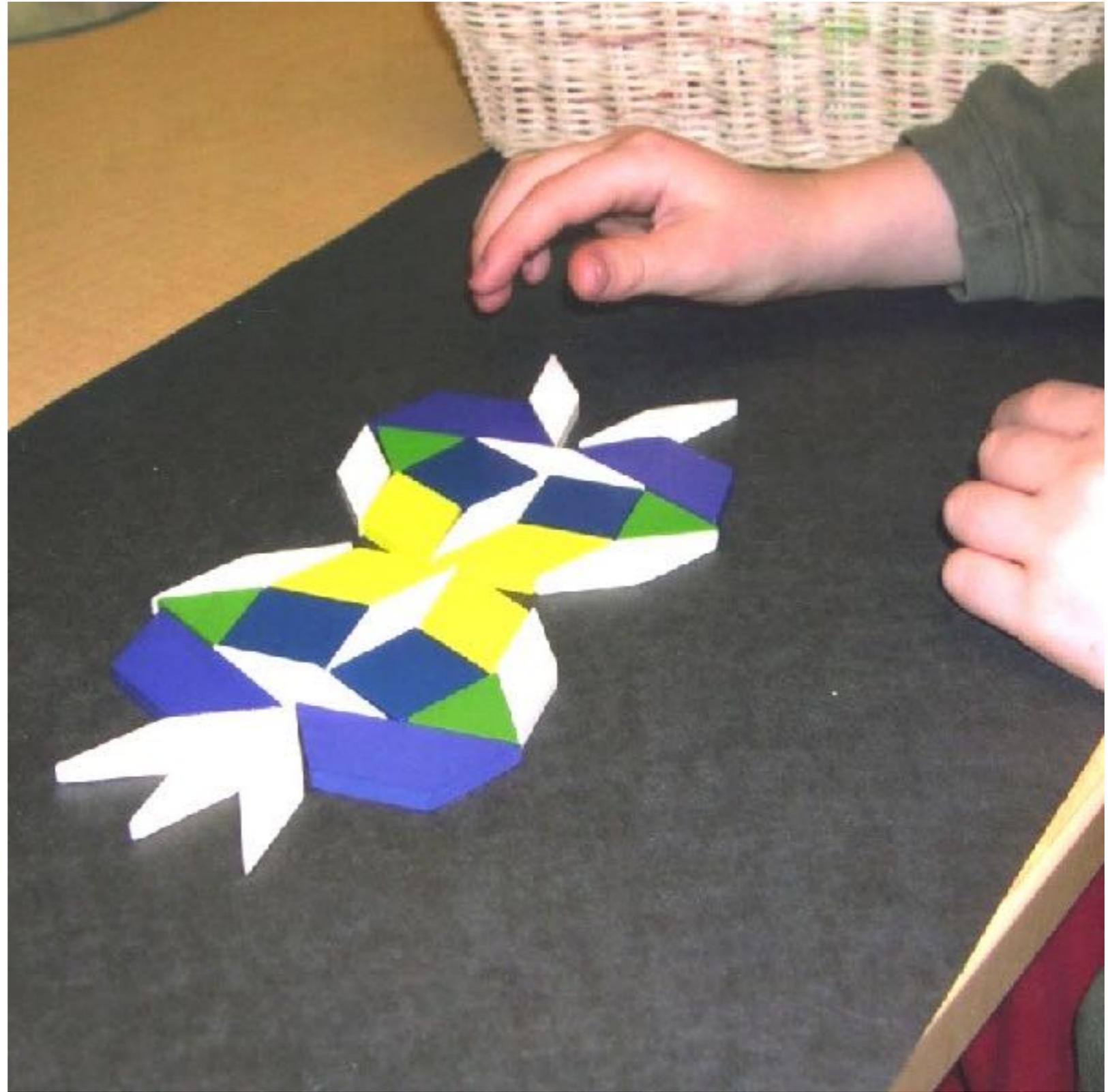
Emilly presents a round mirror.

Sascha rolls the mirror around the design reflecting different viewpoints.



Documentation

Sascha clears
the workspace
and builds this.

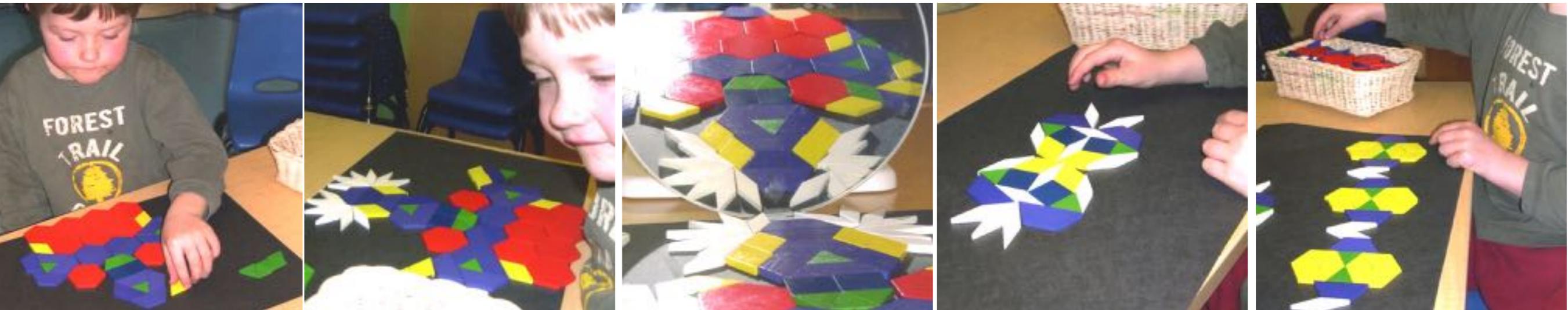


Documentation

In the space below that design Sascha creates a new design.



Facts



Before

indoor free play
black felt workspace
pattern blocks
baskets

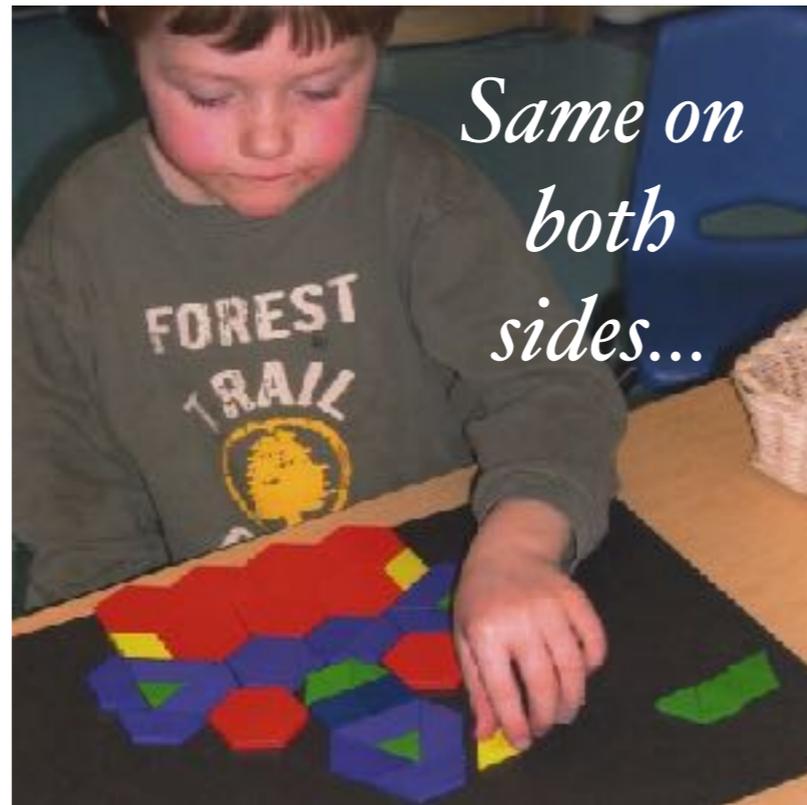
During

Sascha, a five-year-old, acts and speaks
Emily takes photos and adds a mirror

After

Emily examines the documentation and shares it with Tom

We have no way to see what is happening inside his head.



Three Ways to Share This

- 1** We have the FACTS, the “what is,” of the record of Sascha’s pattern block experience that day and can simply record them somewhere or check some item on a form. [Then what to do?]
- 2** We have OUR OWN EXPERIENCE of these facts from a first-hand point of view. [Sascha has no way to know what goes on inside OUR heads either.] We could verbally describe this to someone or write an anecdotal record of it.
- 3** We can offer our own OPINIONS or JUDGMENTS. Since every person has unique “own experience,” each generates unique judgments and opinions. [None of them are reliable.]

What a cute kid! Bright as a button.

He’s having a wonderful time. He’s working hard.

I like what he did. That’s a good job.

A Fourth Way to Share This

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Learning Story

We take the time to create a story of that experience, fully based in OUR SUBJECTIVE POINT OF VIEW. We are caring observers. We evolve and tweak this story together.

We write a story using the traditions of storytelling with pictures without making judgments or offering unsolicited opinions.

We share this story with many audiences, not just the learner. The family. Neighbors. Administrators. Future children.

Learning Story

The Learning Story is the cooperative endeavor of the educators, in this case, Emily and Tom.

We are the storytellers, charged with making this experience not only memorable and engaging but also educational for everyone who reads it.

In the story people can learn how early educators think, the educators can learn by listening to each other, and the educators can cooperatively plan new experiences in the future.

Here is the story we wrote about Sascha from our perspective.

Sascha and the Mirror

This morning I put out the pattern blocks to see what the children would do. I waited to see what would happen.

Several children checked out the pattern blocks and left.

Then I noticed Sascha stayed. He kept making designs long after others had gone.

I decided to get my camera and watch what he was doing.



By the time I got my camera, Sascha already had nested together a lot of blocks on his black felt. They fit snugly side by side when he placed them carefully.

In this photo I took I count 35 in the center design and 5 green triangles in a row in the corner.

Since I saw Sascha place each one carefully, I knew something interesting must be going on in his mind.



When Sascha noticed me watching he said, “I am making it the same on both sides.”

I looked, and indeed it was true. His design was symmetrical! Now I could see his idea.

He added narrow white diamonds to the very top radiating out like rays from the sun. Or maybe flower petals.

Sascha said, “It looks like Rafiki from the Lion King.”

It does! I can see now it’s hair all around the face of a mandrill.



I found a picture of a mandrill just to make sure. Yes, it is true. It is Rafiki all right.



I thought it would be interesting for Sascha to see this creation in a different way, so I handed him the round mirror.

Sascha began rolling the mirror around the design. I made sure to get a picture of that!

No matter where he put the mirror he could see his design was the same on the table and in the mirror.

Well, kind of the same, except it's upside down.



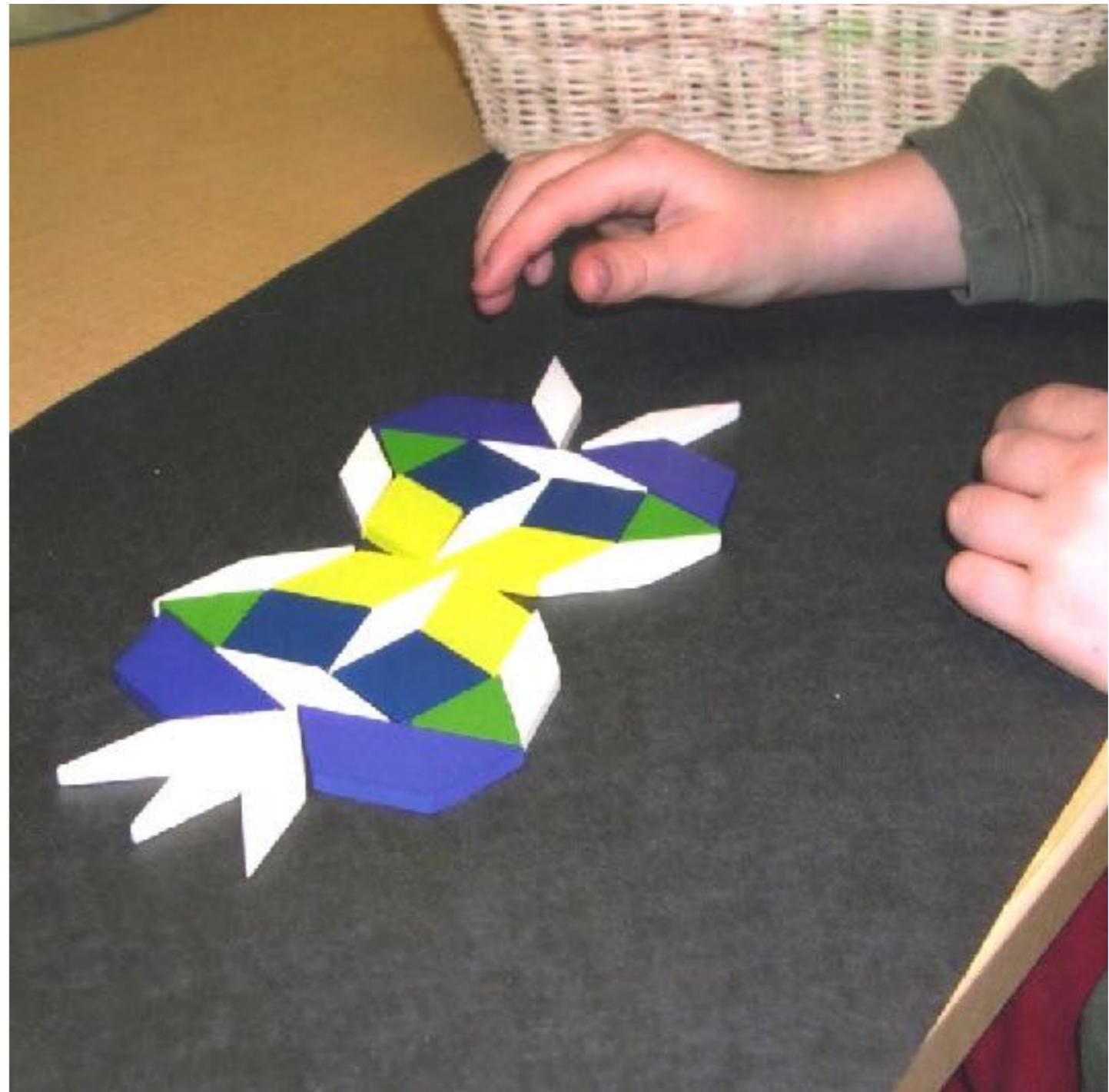
Sascha dumped his design back in the basket.
I thought he was finished for today, but no way!

He then built this new
design you see here.

It looked to me like the
mirror could be in the
center of this design, but
there is no mirror!

What?????

Now what would he do?



Right below Sascha created a blue and white design, then a green and yellow design next to it. Then he added a copy of both designs beside the first.

What was amazing was that it didn't stop! Sascha just kept on going. He added another design, just like the first, right onto the end of it. First one, then the other!

Sascha invented a pattern!

But this was a very special pattern, because each part of it had a mirror in it, too. Each section of the pattern was symmetrical!



What is happening here?

Sascha, I was fascinated by what you did this morning. You created designs with symmetry. That is the word we have for being the same on both sides. You saw in the mirror how the reflection creates symmetry, too.

You then created a different symmetrical design in this picture. This is a design of beauty. Not only is this design the same on both sides, it is pleasing to look at; it is a work of art.



You didn't stop! You began to create mirrors that went on and on. You created a design that could be repeated, each section a mirror image of the last section.

You made a pattern of symmetry!

You created a sequence of designs, each one with a mirror in the middle, going forward one way and going back the other way.

This could keep going on and on forever. But you would need a very long table and millions of blocks!



What opportunities and possibilities might open next?

Imagine how Sascha can take this forward. He can apply this idea in many media: in the blocks, in drawings, or even in clay!

When a person discovers symmetry he or she can find it everywhere, in our hands and bodies, in the way you build a car and a boat, and the shape of a leaf.

With an eye for patterns one can find them in how numbers work, too. All of arithmetic is patterns.

