When something happens over and over, we say there is a **pattern**. **Patterns** are all around us – in music, art, science, math, and everyday living. Young children begin to identify patterns in the world around them. They begin hearing patterns in language and music and make patterns with their bodies by playing such games as Simon Says. After many experiences, young children will see that patterns are predictable and can go on forever.

**Patterns** can be both numeric (using numbers) and non-numeric. The **core** of the pattern is what is repeated, and the **element** is each part of the pattern. In the following pattern - UILT, UILT, UILT; UILT, UILT, UILT, etc. - the **core** is UILT, UILT, UILT; and there are three different **elements**: UILT, UILT, and UILT.

To help your child understand **patterns**, consider the following:

- When taking a walk around the block, discuss with your child interesting arrangements of objects or patterns that appear in the environment (such as brick sidewalks, window and door placement in buildings, landscaping). Encourage your child to point out what he or she is noticing.

- On your walk, help your child make a pattern – walk, walk, hop, clap; walk, walk, hop, clap, etc.

- When your child is eating cereal that has different colors or shapes, help your child create a **pattern** – 2 green, 4 red, 2 green, 4 red, etc. The **core** is 2 green, 4 red; and the different **elements** are the red and green cereal. You might also use the following elements – star, moon, clover – to make the core of 1 star, 2 moons, 4 clovers.

- Have your child rename the same pattern using letters (1 knife, 2 forks, 4 spoons; 1 knife, 2 forks, 4 spoons …or A, B B, C C C C; A, B B, C C C C…)

- Help your child find patterns around the house – in wallpaper or in the fabric of clothes or furniture.