



Ronan Discovers Patterns Through Play

January 2025

During free-choice time, Ronan selected a hat from the dramatic play area. As I observed from the art table nearby, he repeatedly placed the hat on his head, saying "on," and then removed it, saying "off." Watching this, I joined in by acknowledging his actions and saying, "Ronan, 'on' and 'off' are opposites." He paused, looked at me, and confidently replied, "No, Teacher Alexis, it is a pattern."



I was taken aback and smiled, realizing he was absolutely correct. During circle time earlier in the day, we had introduced patterns, using farm animals to make connections with the children. I had laid out a sequence of big cow, small cow, big cow, small cow, and asked, "What comes next?" At the time, Ronan quietly said, "I don't know."



In hindsight, Ronan's play during free-choice time revealed his understanding of patterns in his own way and on his own terms. Although he didn't feel ready to share during circle time, he used the hat to confidently express his knowledge in a space where he felt comfortable. This moment beautifully illustrated how children often process and communicate their learning in ways we don't immediately expect, reminding us to pay attention to the subtle ways they express their understanding.

