

Hop-a-Pattern

Watch. Listen. Remember.



Grades: 1-5

20-25 minutes

Executive Function & Attention Skills

Big Idea: Our brains learn best when we pay attention to what's happening, remember what worked, and use that information to make smarter choices next time.

STEAM Connection: Scientists and engineers test, observe, and adjust based on what they learn – just like we do when solving problems or working through challenges in life.

Materials Needed

- 12 foam or felt squares in various colors
- Floor space for a 4x3 grid
- Secret hidden path patterns (next page)

Introduction

- Say: "Today, you'll need sharp eyes, listening ears, and a strong memory to solve a secret pattern. Each move teaches you something – whether it works or not – and your brain keeps that information to help you make better choices next time."

Main Activity

- **Set up the grid:** Arrange 12 colored squares in a 4x3 pattern on the floor.
- **Ask:** "Can you think of a time when you learned from a mistake or remembered what worked to help you do better?" (Examples: fixing a math problem, remembering a friend's preference, adjusting how you built something, saying or doing something that caused a problem for you or other people)
- **Explain the challenge: How it works** (read aloud)
 - Grid & goal: The grid has 12 squares; the secret hidden path uses exactly 8 squares in a specific order (I have the map).
 - Start: One player at a time, begins at the top row.
 - Moves: Step forward, sideways, or backward (no diagonals). Each square may be used once in the path.
 - Signals/Vocal Sound Effects
 - "Ding" = correct square (and correct order). Keep going.
 - "Buzz" = incorrect square or correct square in the wrong order. Stop and step off.
 - Turn flow: The next player restarts from the beginning, repeats all known correct steps, then tries one new step to extend the path.
 - Decoys: Four squares are not used at all—stepping on them will always buzz.
 - Safety/clarity: One student on the grid at a time; one foot per step, no jumping across squares.
- **Play the game.**
- **Continue** until the 8-square path is revealed, then celebrate!
- **Try again** with a new secret hidden path.

Debrief & Reflection

- "How did paying attention to what others did help you?"
- "What happened when someone forgot a step or got distracted?"
- "How is this game like solving a problem at school or with friends?"
- "How can remembering what worked (or didn't) in the past help you make better choices next time?"

Counselor Tips

- **Small Group:** Great for focus, memory, and self-control practice.
- **Parent Connection:** Encourage memory or observation games at home (e.g., Simon, I Spy, or Concentration).
- **Extension:** Have students design their own 8-step pattern to challenge classmates

Alignment

- ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors:
 - M 5 Belief in positive future
 - B-SS 2 Create positive relationships
 - B-SMS 6 Demonstrate ability to overcome barriers
- CASEL: Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Responsible Decision-Making

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ANSWER KEY

- Use this sheet as your pattern guide for the activity.
- Each 4×3 grid represents the floor layout of 12 squares.
- Numbered squares below (1-8) mark the “hidden” path—these numbers are for you only and should not appear on the floor squares.
- Students may step forward, backward, or sideways (no diagonals).
- Signal “ding” for correct steps and “buzz” for incorrect ones. A “buzz” indicates the end of a player’s turn.
- Each subsequent player repeats the known sequence before adding a new step until the full 8-step path is discovered.

	1	2		1	2	3		1		
	4	3			5	4		2	3	4
6	5			7	6			7	6	5
7	8			8				8		

3	2	1		1			5	4	1
4				3	2		6	3	2
5	6			4	5	6	7		
	7	8			8	7	8		



COOL!