

FINE MOTOR ACTIVITIES FOR SUMMER FUN

WRAPPING PLASTIC INSECTS Materials needed: plastic insects and pieces of white yarn in a bowl. Have child wrap plastic insects with pieces of white yarn (“spider webs”). When she’s finished wrapping all of the insects, have her unwrap them and place the yarn back in the bowl

BIRDS EATING WORMS Materials needed: pipe cleaners cut in small pieces to make “worms”, a small container and a clothespin. Child uses the clothespin as the bird’s beak to catch the worms and place them in the container. NOTE: Make sure the child grasps the clothespin with the pads of his thumb (on one side) and pointer and middle fingers (on the other side).

MARBLES AND MELONS SCOOPS Materials needed: marbles, melon scoops and an ice cube tray or egg carton. Have your child scoop up a marble and place it in the tray or box. You can add a math component to this by putting a numeral in the compartment and having your children put in the number of marbles called for. This activity can also be done with beans.

POURING Materials needed: bottles and seeds, popcorn, cereal, sand, water, etc. Pour material provided from one bottle into another. Vary the size of the bottle tops.

WATER DROPS AND TINY CUPS Materials needed: small eye dropper and bathtub shapes with suction cups on the bottom, colored water in a container. Squeezing the eye dropper bulb to suck water into the tube is a wonderful activity, though sometimes tricky for a child to master at first. Once the tube is full, ask your child to drop one drop of water into each of the suction cups. As a variation, your child can pick up a pony bead and drop in in each of the suction cups. Pony beads may be picked up with fingers or with tweezers.

CLOTHESLINE Materials needed: a clothesline of string strung between two chairs or tied to the handles of a tray, clothespins, dolls clothes or pieces of material cut into shirt and pant shapes. Children grasp the clothespin with the pads of the thumb, index and middle fingers to hang the “clothes” on the line.

CLOTHESPINS ON A BOX Materials needed: clothespins and a sturdy box. Your child will squeeze the clothespin (using the proper grip) and fasten them to the sides of the box. To vary, you can write letters and/or numerals on the clothespins and on the box sides. The child can then match the numerals or letters.

NUTS AND BOLTS Materials needed: nuts and bolts from the hardware store. This is a wonderful activity using fingers, hands and wrists as the children grasp and twist the nut to attach it to the bolt. This activity can also be done with padlocks and keys.

PLATE SEWING Materials needed: Styrofoam plates, yarn, plastic needles or metal blunt-tipped needles. Older children can thread their own needles; younger children need help. Have your child sew the yarn onto the plate by pushing the needle in and out through the plate.

STRINGING PONY BEADS ON PIPE CLEANERS Materials needed: pipe cleaners and beads. Have your child string beads on the pipe cleaners to make bracelets. They can also use this activity to make patterns and/or you can tape a piece of tape with a number written on it to the top of each pipe cleaner. The child should then string that number of beads on the pipe cleaner.

TWEEZERS AND SEEDS Materials needed: seeds like beans or corn, tweezers, containers. Have your child pick up the small items with the tweezers and put them in a container. This can also be done with togs and pompoms.

SCISSORS (and gluing) Materials needed: scissors and paper. Cutting is another great activity for fine motor development. Make sure your child is putting his thumb in the top hole and his index and middle fingers in the bottom hole.

PLAYING WITH PAPER CLIPS Materials needed: paper clips and paper (colored clips and paper are even more fun) Ask your child to clip paper together. She can match colors if she'd like.

TOOTHPICK PUNCH Materials needed: toothpicks, construction paper, a carpet square or old mouse pad. Children can draw (or trace) a shape on the paper. Then, putting the paper on the carpet square, use the toothpick to punch holes all around the outline of the drawing. Hang it in a window and see the light shine through.

CRUMPLING BITS OF PAPER Materials needed: small pieces of tissue or typing or printing paper. Your child can have fun crumpling paper to use in art activities – maybe smoke from a chimney or flowers or clouds.

TEARING PAPER Materials needed: Printer paper or construction paper. Have your child grasp the paper with thumbs (on top) and index and middle fingers behind, and tear the paper into strips. You can use this for art projects or just for fun!

PUTTING MONEY INTO A BANK Materials needed: a bank with a slot and coins. Have your child hold 2 or 3 coins in her hand at one time, and put the coins, one by one, into the slot without dropping any. As your child becomes more adept at this, increase the number of coins in her hand.

Legos©, puzzles with knobs, peg boards, Unifix© cubes, geo-boards, and clay (preferably) or playdough are wonderful toys for developing and promoting good manual dexterity. Adding plastic knives, beads, stones, etc. to the clay makes it even more fun and engaging. Sewing and lacing cards, store-bought or homemade are great. Shoe laces with plastic tips make good laces for stringing. Bathtub squirt toys and squirt bottles are also good and fun!