Home Learning Activities Woodpeckers

1. Pasta Play

You will need Dried pasta (including spaghetti) Cups/ pots/ pans / spoons (whatever you have available) Colander String/Wool

Posting spaghetti through a colander is brilliant for fine motor and concentration skills. Thread pasta – like macaroni onto string (or use Cherrios or Weetos) Dried pasta is also brilliant for developing children's imaginative play. Try mixing the different types of dried pasta up in the pans and share it out amongst their teddies and dolls.

2. Water Play

You will need a washing up bowl or the bath! Cups , jugs, bottles, liquid soap, safe food colouring.

Water play enables children to experiment in a safe environment with basic concepts such as volume. Additionally, water play is great for learning consequences of actions. Add in some hand-eye coordination and physical strength, and water play is a firm favourite.

3. Play Dough

You will need 8 tbsp plain flour 2 tbsp table salt 60ml warm water food colouring 1 tbsp vegetable oil

Method

Mix the flour and salt in a large bowl. In a separate bowl mix together the water, a few drops of food colouring and the oil. Pour the coloured water into the flour mix and bring together with a spoon. Dust a work surface with a little flour and turn out the dough. Knead together for a few minutes to form a smooth, pliable dough. If you want a more intense colour you can work in a few extra drops of food colouring. Store in a plastic sandwich bag (squeeze out the air) in the fridge to keep it fresh

Play dough has immense potential for learning. Not only does it strengthen fingers in preparation for a lifetime of writing, it teaches fine motor skills, creativity, and hand-eye coordination. Add some beads to the dough for a fine-motor exercise, or get the kids threading beads on to lengths of dried spaghetti held in the dough, for extra play-value.

4. Dress-Up and Role Play

Let the children loose with a bunch of dressing-up clothes and props such as toy doctor’s kits, and let their imaginations run wild. Soon you’ll discover the budding doctor, vet, nurse, astronaut, chef or thespian. Dressing-up helps children to begin to make sense of the adult world, roles, and interests, as well as boosting social interaction. Not least, dressing-up helps to reinforce the self-care aspects of self-dressing which is essential for primary school life.

6. Drawing and Painting

Letting children run wild with paints and drawing tools allows them to experience their world in a sensory way and develop self-expression, whilst also developing pre-writing skills. Furthermore, it’s an invitation to learn about colours, mixing, and good-old tidying up!

7. Blocks, Jigsaws, and Shape Sorters

Playing with blocks, jigsaws, and shape sorters all lay the foundations of spatial thinking, logical reasoning, ordering, and recognising various shapes, sizes, and colours.

8. Sensory Play

Sensory play is any play activity which involves touch, smell, taste, sight and hearing. This can be provided with a plate of jelly, aqua beads, ice, rainbow rice, or even different types of cooked pasta. Sensory play stimulates exploration and the building blocks of science and investigation.

9. Basic Board Games

There are so many board games available for even the youngest players, and these should be embraced – not only for their fun factor, but for their learning potential. In addition to the themes of numbers, colours, shapes, and early phonics, these games are vital for teaching children turn-taking and sharing.

10. Cooking and Pretend-Cooking

Cooking, and pretend cooking, serving, and shops, are great play scenarios for kids. Cooking itself combines elements of sensory play, mathematical concepts, home safety, and following processes. Pretend cooking, serving, and toy shops also teach basic mathematical ideas as well as social interaction, and how to be thoughtful to others.