

Pasta Mania!

Playing with pasta, especially macaroni, can be an excellent way for your child to hone fine motor skills. Macaroni is small and smooth and children can find it challenging to hold. This is where practicing use of the fingers comes into play.



For the activities below, use any pasta that tickles your fancy.

Feeling Farfalle

This is a great activity for your child's touch senses. Fill a tub or large bowl with pasta of choice – farfalle, macaroni, penne, fusilli, rigatoni. Use pasta of different colours like whole wheat or spinach pasta if available. Hand out measure cups, funnels, and spoons to let your child touch, scoop, and pour the pasta. Fill a small jar with some of the pasta and you instantly have a pasta shaker - macaroni maracas.

Sort Spaghetti From Spirali

This activity encourages analytical skills, and hand-eye coordination in your child. Use a few different pasta shapes dyed in different colours (see recipe below for dyed pasta). Hand out a few transparent pasta containers and invite your child to start sorting pasta by shape and colour. Explain the difference between the pasta shapes, texture, size and colour.

Little Pasta Art

If you have an abundance of dyed pasta (anelli, orzo or other small shapes), pasta art is a lot of fun. All you need is pasta, glue and a sheet of construction paper. Arrange and glue the pasta shapes to make a unique work of art! This activity encourages your child to concentrate and focus while building up his fine motor skills.

Glitz, Glamour, Glitter, Glue

With dyed pasta, the next step is making glitter. Simply pulverize small amounts of dyed pasta (put the pasta into a Ziploc bag, seal, and crush contents with a rolling pin) to create macaroni glitter! Sprinkle into your child's next art project to add a little touch of glamour.

Noodle Necklaces

This activity takes the effort up a notch. Older children will enjoy the creative challenge of creating their own fashion accessories out of dyed pasta - you can make bracelets or necklaces, whatever you prefer.

Ingredients

- Dyed pasta shapes (think macaroni, rigatoni, penne – any pasta with a hole)
- String or twine
- Tape
- Matchstick or toothpick

Method

- Cut string to length depending on what you are making. A necklace can be about 60cm long, and a bracelet about 20cm. Leave a little access to tie a knot.
- Tape a matchstick or toothpick to one end of the string to serve as a stopper. Make sure the matchstick/toothpick does not have sharp edges.
- Let your child string his necklace or bracelet.

- When the stringing is done, secure both ends of the string with a double knot. Trim off excess string.

Recipe For Dyed Pasta

Ingredients

- 2 teaspoons white vinegar (or hand sanitizer)
- 10-12 drops of food colouring
- 1/2 cup of pasta

Method

- Mix vinegar and food colouring in a small Ziploc bag. Add pasta.
- Seal the bag and massage contents to spread the colouring about. Let sit for 5 minutes.
- Turn pasta out onto a large piece of newspaper or paper towel and let dry.
- Repeat process but using another colour and pasta type.
- Supervise your child at all times when dealing with liquids and small items.