



TODDLER WORK TO DO AT HOME

Coloured rice scavenger hunt

Mom or dad to colour rice for toddler. Toddlers can even help when colouring the rice. The colouring of the rice can be done the night before or earlier the morning of the work, so that the rice is dry when doing the work.

In a big container, pour the rice for the toddler and hide some of their smaller toys in the rice. They need to know the name of the item or toy placed in the rice.

Sit with the toddler at the table and ask them to place their hands into the rice and try to find the individual toys.

Replace the toys and ask child to find a toy in the rice and name before pulling it out of the rice. This is much trickier and will only apply to older toddlers.

You could use plain rice, packing peanuts, beans, sand or any available regular media in which to hide the items.



Coloured pasta scavenger hunt

Mom or dad to colour pasta for toddler. Toddlers can even help when colouring the pasta. The colouring of the pasta can be done the night before or earlier the morning of the work, so that the pasta is dry when doing the work. Make use of 2-3 different colours when colouring the pasta. i.e. red, blue and green

Set out 3 bowls, one red bowl, a blue bowl, and a green bowl, also add your big container with all the mixed coloured pasta in. If not, mom or dad can glue one of each colour pasta onto a bowl, or even put a coloured piece of paper at the bottom of the bowl. Now, sit down with toddler at the table, show them the different colours of pasta in the big container. Also show them the 3 different colour bowls you have set out for them and tell them the colours or even ask them to tell you the colours. Show them how you match the coloured pasta into the bowls that you have set out.

This is a colour sorting activity. You can use any other items to sort into your groupings e.g. lego blocks, cars, small balls or pom-poms.

If pasta is used, it can be glued onto paper for a fine motor activity or, if your child is adept, threaded into a necklace once the searching has lost its appeal.

Scooping and transferring

You can make use of the left-over rice from the scavenger rice hunt, plain rice, beans, pasta, dried chickpeas, lentils or peas or any similar items for this activity.

Place the rice in a bowl. Have another bowl on the table that will be empty at the beginning of the activity. Also have a big spoon at the table. Show the toddler how to scoop the rice using the spoon from one bowl to the other bowl.

Size sorting

In one big container, mix a whole bunch of toddler toys that all differ in size. Sit with toddler and show them how you can sort the toys from big to small and explain to them how size differs amongst the toys.

You can also place all big toys in one container, and smaller toys in another container.

Sorting bin

In a container have a variety of toys and/or some items from your kitchen i.e. fruit, cars, trucks, balls, and lego blocks. Sit with toddler and show them how to sort the items in the container, i.e. place all the trucks together. Now place all the balls together etc.

Do not exceed 5 items in each grouping to start with.

Ice cubes work

Mom or dad to freeze ice cubes for toddler the night before. Paint is also needed for this activity as well as an apron.

In a big container, place the ice cubes or even ask toddler to help you place ice cubes in the container. Get the paint and paintbrushes for the toddler and sit them down at the table. Allow the toddler to paint the ice cubes in any colours that he chooses. They will eventually probably want to make use of their hands and if so, allow them to.

Sensory bag

A sensory bag can differ and have all sorts of things inside them. In this case, I think we can fill them with the coloured rice. If you have any left over from the activity when doing the scavenger hunt. Fill a zip lock bag, or any see-through bag with the coloured rice. Use a wide type of tape to tape the opening of the bag, so the rice does not fall out. Now you can do writing exercises with your toddler. They can draw in the rice or simply just run their hands through the rice and get that feeling on their fingers.

Pegging coffee tin

For this activity you will need a clean, empty coffee tin, or any similar type of tin. You could also use a bowl or small basket. Use about 5 clothes pegs and show your toddler how to peg the pegs onto the rim of the tin.



This activity is only applicable for older toddlers. Finger strength, hand eye coordination and position in space (proprioception), needs to be developed to do this successfully.

Hammering tees into old playdough

Make use of old playdough and push it down firmly into a bowl. Gather 'old' or unused golf tees, and a small toddler hammer. Show the toddler how to hammer the golf tees into the playdough. The toddler can take the tees out again, and hammer the tees into the playdough and repeat the activity.

If you do not have playdough you could use a Styrofoam block such as delivered household appliances are packaged in, or flower arranging oasis.

Playdough cuts

Make use of old playdough. Sitting with the toddler, let them cut the playdough making use of playdough scissors to 'prepare' them for the following activity. Sit with them for as long as needed. Playdough scissors are plastic with rounded tips and no sharp cutting edges. They are available from Mambo's. The scissor cutting motion is tricky so help your child to place their fingers correctly.



Toilet roll hair cut

Mom or dad, or even toddler can draw faces on toilet paper rolls. Mom or dad cut lines into the top end of the toilet paper roll to create hair. (as shown in picture below). This will be too difficult for a toddler to accomplish.

Show your toddler how to cut the 'hair' of the toilet roll. Sit with them throughout the whole activity or as long as they are interested, because they will be making use of a sharp object.

It might be a good idea to discuss that cutting your dolls', siblings' or own hair is not a good idea.



Counting toys with toddler

Counting with a toddler does not aim to teach them to count. It is preparation work to familiarise them with the words even though they will not yet be able to understand the inherent meaning. Include counting in your daily activities e.g.

Bring me one shirt for you to put on.

We have two oranges to peel for our snack.

I am putting in one scoop of washing powder.

Hand me two pegs please.

Where possible and natural, point to the items individually while counting.

Taping shapes onto the carpet

Use masking tape to tape shapes onto a mat, or anywhere in your house. Start off simple shapes, i.e. square and a circle. Walk with the toddler on the tape in the shape that you have pasted on the mat. Talk to them about the shape and tell them the shape.

You could also draw the shape on paving or in the garage using blackboard chalk.

Keep balloon in air using a kitchen paper towel roll as a bat

Blow up a balloon for your toddler. Make use of a kitchen paper towel roll as a bat and play tennis with your toddler. Make sure the balloon stays in the air. If they don't want to make use of their towel roll, allow them to hit the balloon with their hands.

Mystery bag

Mystery bags are loads of fun for toddlers. In the bag, you can put feathers, a peg, a paintbrush, cotton wool, ball, lego block, and maybe a car for example. Allow the toddler to stick only their hand into the bag and pull out the first item they find. They should be able to name the item for you.

An advanced form of this activity is to name the item on touch only i.e. name the item before it is removed from the bag.

Water transfer using a sponge

In a big container pour water for your toddler. Have a separate bowl where the toddler can squeeze the water into, using a sponge. Show the toddler that the sponge collects water, and when you squeeze it water runs out of the sponge and into the second bowl.

You can later add food colouring if wanted.

An apron is necessary for this activity.



Pouring solids

Toddlers love pouring, and this activity will be perfect for them. Set out two jugs for the toddler. Show them how to pour pasta shells from one jug into jug into the next. To make it more difficult for the older toddler, you can use gradually smaller jugs and/or smaller pouring items i.e. first pour pasta shells, then dried black eyed beans and when they have mastered this, use lentils, rice or sand.

Pouring water – big jug, medium jug, small jug

Pouring water is even more fun than pouring dry ingredients for toddlers. With this activity, I like to colour the water for toddlers, just a small drop of food colouring so that they can see the water more clearly. You can use two jugs or two cups to pour the water back and forth.

Scent jars

Let your toddler smell an orange peel, a little bit of vanilla essence, a cinnamon stick and a slice of cucumber or lavender flowers. Any familiar and distinct smells may be used. Now place the items in an opaque container and ask your toddler to smell the jar and tell you if they know the scent coming from the jar. (When preparing food, pouring fabric softener, working in the garden, applying perfume etc., let your toddler smell items to familiarise them with various fragrances.)

Taste test

In a muffin tray, place a variety of little snacks in each muffin cup. For example, something sweet, something sour, something bitter, something spicy and something salty. Allow the toddler to taste each snack and discuss with them what it tastes like and whether they enjoyed the taste.

Painting using different paint brushes

Make use of pegs and peg cotton wool, a piece of foil, a spikey ball, a sponge, a pipe cleaner, a leaf or flower or a feather. Give the toddler a big piece of paper and plenty of paint. Allow them to paint using the pegs with the different ends pegged onto them. The toddler will love this, as every time they pick up a different 'paintbrush' the outcome on the page is different.

Sticky wall balloon paste

If you don't feel comfortable with sticking a sticky tape to a wall, stick it to a cupboard or on a window, a large piece of cardboard or even the sliding door. Blow up small balloons for toddler and show them to stick the balloon onto the wall. The balloon will stick and not fall off, unless pulled off by the toddler.

The sticky tape can be removed afterwards with tea tree oil.



Spooning work – big spoons, medium spoons, small spoons

Spooning work is a great fine motor work for toddlers. Again, start off with big spoons and gradually move to smaller spoons as proficiency is attained with a size.

In one bowl place small balls, and allow your toddler to spoon the balls with a big spoon from one bowl to the next bowl. Help them if they struggle.

They could possibly choose to do this with their hands as well

With medium size spoons you could spoon beans or paste shells and with small spoons use lentils, peas or tice.

'Snowball' (cotton wool balls) transfer – medium spoons

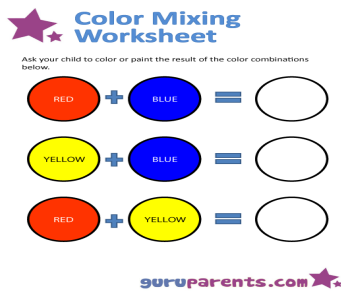
Snowball transfer is basically the same as the previous activity. In this case, just make use of medium size spoons, show toddler how to scoop cotton wool balls from one bowl to the next bowl. Again, they might want to make use of their hands and not the spoon, which is perfectly fine as well.

Colour mixing – making 'new' colours

This is an activity that the toddlers will love doing. Make use of primary colours, and instead of using paint, use water that has food colouring in it. Instead of doing it on a piece of paper, make use of 3 different bowls to mix the coloured water. Make sure to tell and show them that when mixing red and blue for example it makes the colour purple etc. Show your toddler how to use a dropper to transfer drops of a colour at a time, when doing this activity.

If mom or dad would like, you can make use of paint.

An apron is necessary for this activity.



Cork push

Mom or dad can make use of a coffee tin or similar again. Cut a hole the size of a wine cork into the lid. Gather a whole bunch of wine corks for your toddler. Show them that the cork can fit through the hole when pushed down. Once all the corks are in the tin, show them that you can take the lid off the tin, take the wine corks out and redo the whole activity.

