



Teacher-Made Materials

Art Materials

Bingo Dabbers

Collect drinkable yogurt containers. Fill containers with diluted washable tempera paint. Glue sponge on opening of container. *Variation:* Fill nylon with stuffing and insert into container

Bubble Wrap Mittens

Bubble wrap
Paint
Paper
Scissors
Shallow Containers

Cut out pairs of mitten shapes from bubble wrap. Put two matching shapes together and secure along the edges with tape leaving the wrist side open. Show the child how to place hand inside mitten. Invite child to dip mitten in paint and place on paper.

Carpet Squares Art

Set out a variety of colors of carpet squares. Invite children to use the squares to create designs on the floor.

Confetti Crayons

Insert a foil baking cup in each cup of a muffin tin. Chop peeled crayons into pieces and place in baking cups. Heat crayons at 250 degrees for 5 minutes or until crayon pieces just begin to melt. Take the muffin tin out of the oven before the colors mix together and become muddy. When the crayons have cooled, peel off the baking cups.

Easy Stickers

Cut shapes out of brightly colored self-stick paper. Peel the backing off and lightly attach the shapes to waxed paper. Provide stickers to the children to decorate artwork and other projects.

Finger-painting Bags

Select a large resealable plastic bag. Put $\frac{1}{4}$ cup liquid starch and 3 tbsp. powdered tempera paint into each bag. Push the air out and seal the bag. Rub and squeeze each bag to mix the starch and paint together. Invite the children to draw or write with their fingers on the outside of the bags. *Variation:* Put a colored piece of construction paper under the bag for a different effect.

Flour Finger Paint

1 cup flour
1½ cups cold water
Food coloring or tempera paint
2 tbsp. salt
1¼ cups hot water

Put flour and salt in a saucepan. Add cold water and beat with whisk or eggbeater until smooth. Add



hot water and boil until mixture is thick. Beat again until smooth. Color as desired with food coloring or tempera paint. Store in covered container in refrigerator.

Flour Poster Paint

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup flour
1 cup water
2 tbsp. water per container
3 tbsp. powdered tempera paint per container
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. liquid starch or liquid detergent per container
Small jars or plastic containers

Measure flour into saucepan. Slowly add 1 cup of water while stirring to make a smooth paste. Heat, stirring constantly, until paste begins to thicken. Cool. Place one quarter of the paste into each small container. Add 3 tbsp. of powdered tempera paint and 2 tbsp. water to each container. For a matte finish, add liquid starch. For a glossy finish, add liquid detergent. Store covered.

Paint Roller

Collect paper towel tubes. Lace string through tube, tie string. Dip tube in paint. Hold onto string while rolling tube on paper. *Optional:* Add textures to tube (string, material, sponges) or cut designs into tube.

Pop Bottle Art

Provide paint in shallow pans, assorted sizes of bottles and paper. Invite the children to press the bottom of the bottles into the paint then press on the paper.

Pop Bottle Stamps

Collect pop bottle lids. Make play dough or purchase Crayola Model Magic. Insert ball of play dough into lid so that a little sticks out. Carve design into play dough. Dab stamp onto stamp pad. Push stamp down on paper.

Rainbow Crayons

Tape two or three crayons together to make a rainbow crayon.

Splatter Painting

Collect mesh strawberry baskets. Provide shallow containers with paint. Invite children to dip the strawberry basket in paint and place on paper.

Sponge Painting

Cut shapes out of sponges. Glue the sponges to detergent or fabric softener lids. Invite children to sponge paint with these easy-to-grip stampers.

Texture Mittens

Using old mittens. sew lace, sponges, a dust mop, yarn or other interesting textures onto palm of mitten. Invite children to dip mitten in paint and place on paper.

Way Cool Watercolors

Squirt washable tempera paints onto paper plate. Let dry overnight. Wet a paintbrush with water. Dab wet brush onto dried paint.



Manipulatives

Artwork or Photo Puzzles

Invite children to draw or paint on construction paper or take their photo. Laminate child's artwork or photo, then cut into two or three pieces. (Make sure to ask the children before cutting up their picture!) Invite the children to recreate their artwork or photo.

Bubble in a Tube

Find furniture tips that fit exactly and securely over the ends of clear plastic tubing. Cut the tubing to approximately 18 inches. Glue the tip to one end of the tube. Fill the tube with colored water, leaving half an inch of open space at the top. Glue a tip on the other end. You can also add things such as marbles, sequins, glitter, pom poms, etc.



Can Shape Sorter

Collect various sizes of cans with plastic lids. Cut a shape or shapes into the lids. Find objects that fit into the hole (e.g. an empty spool for a round hole).

Can Stacking

Save various sizes of empty cans and plastic lids. Glue the lids on the cans. Provide the cans in the block area or manipulative area and invite children to stack the cans. Use cans that the children may recognize (formula, animal treats, etc.).

Carpet Square Puzzle

Place four identical carpet squares together on the floor to make a large square. Use a permanent felt-tip marker to draw a simple shape on the carpeting that covers all four squares. Mix the squares up and invite a child to put the puzzle together.

Cellophane in Embroidery Hoop

Put colored cellophane into an embroidery hoop. The child will enjoy looking through it and making the world change colors.

Checkerboard/Graph Board

Create graph board out of paper, cardboard, tag board, poster board, fabric or extra-sturdy paper. Decide on movers or cover-ups – the choices are endless! Milk lids, pop bottle lids, flat marbles, mosaic tiles (make sure tiles are not choking hazards).

Clothespin Pickup

Provide spring-type clothespins, a box and small, easy-to-pick-up objects such as a spoon, cotton balls, beanbags and a crumpled up piece of paper. Invite children to use the clothespins to pick up the items and put them in the box.

Cookie Sheet Magnet Board

Provide a metal cookie sheet and various magnets (purchased or created).

Greeting Card Puzzle

Collect various types of greeting cards. Cut or tear off the front picture and cut each picture into two or three pieces. Store in storage bags so you don't lose pieces.

Lid Puzzle

Collect several metal lids of various sizes. Stick a small magnet on top of the lid. Cut holes into cardboard to match each lid size. Provide magnet wands for children to use with the lid puzzle. Variations: Leave magnets off and use various types of lids (plastic and metal).

Magic Scarves

Cut a round hole at one end of a shoe box (or a Lysol/Clorox/baby wipes/Pringles container). Tie assorted scarves together and place in box. Have one end of a scarf sticking out of the hole. Invite children to pull scarf out of hole.

Matching Lids With Containers

Collect different sized plastic containers with easy-to-remove lids. Invite children to find the lid that matches the container.

Nesting Boxes

Collect three or four open boxes that will fit one inside the other. Put the boxes together and invite children to explore the boxes. Encourage them to stack and nest the boxes, or decorate them with paint or stickers.

Nesting Cans

Collect several empty cans of various sizes. Let the children experiment and play with the cans. While interacting with the children, show them how the cans can go inside each other or stack on top of each other. (Make sure to use a can opener that leaves no rough edges. The cans can be decorated, painted, or the labels can be left on to expose the children to environmental print.



Nesting Cups

Collect various detergent/fabric softener lids. Some lids will fit inside each other. Other lids will screw into each other.

Puzzle

Collect toilet paper or paper towel tubes and decorate. Cut tube into multiple pieces.

Shape Pillows

Create pillows in various shapes. For example, make large and small pillows in the shapes of a circle, square and a triangle. Talk about the different shapes and sizes. Let the children sort the pillows by size and shape.

Shape Puzzle

Cut several shapes out of thick cardboard. Punch a hole in the middle of the shapes. Insert yarn into hole, make a loop and tie off one end. Children can use the yarn to pull the shape out of the puzzle.

Sorting

- Collect various gloves or mittens or socks. Invite children to find the matches. (Or hide the gloves/mittens around the room and have children go on a scavenger hunt to find the matches.)
- Fill one shallow container with blue play dough and another with red play dough. Paint the tips of several slot type clothespins red or blue. Invite children to match the clothespins to the play dough color.
- Collect various colors and types of socks. Invite children to sort by color or size. Supply clothes baskets for sorting tools.
- Cut large sponges into squares and invite children to match colors.

Sponge Puzzles

Collect several large, flat sponges. Cut a simple shape out of each sponge to make a puzzle. Invite children to take the puzzle apart and put it together again.

Stackers

Remove labels from various plastic bottles. Cut out the middle section of each bottle and trim rough edges. Decorate the rings with self-stick paper or stickers. Provide rings for children to stack. Rings can also be threaded onto a garden hose or aquarium hose.

Styrofoam Lacing Cards

Cut a large shape out of a Styrofoam food tray. Punch holes around outside edges of shape with a hole punch. Tie a piece of yarn to one of the holes. Tape the other end of the yarn to make a “needle.” Invite child to “sew” the shape with the yarn. *Variations:* Use a paper plate or a mesh strawberry basket instead of Styrofoam; take ribbon outside and weave through the playground fence; use a laundry basket and weave ribbon or strips of material; cut holes in sponges for lacing.

Styrofoam Puzzle

Collect large Styrofoam food trays and several cookie cutters. Arrange the cookie cutters on the tray. Using a craft knife, cut around each cookie cutter. Discard (or reuse) the cut out piece.



Texture Dominoes

Attach fabric to index cards, Encourage children to match types, textures, colors and patterns.

Toothbrush Holders

Find several colors of plastic tube-type toothbrush holders. Children will enjoy pulling them apart and putting them back together.

Travel Kit

Find a zippered travel bag/kit. Fill various plastic containers with objects of similar shapes: playing cards in the soap box, jar lids in a round box, plastic straws in the toothbrush holder, scarf stuffed into a bottle. Children will enjoy opening and closing all the containers and fitting the things inside. Note: remove any small lids that may be a choking hazard.

Turntable Merry-Go-Round

Glue jar lids or spray can tops, open side up, to a turntable. Children can give “rides” to toys.

Music, Blocks, Gross Motor

Balls

- Invite children to roll a ball back and forth to each other.
- Set up a bowling game using milk cartons, shoe boxes, blocks or yogurt cups as pins.
- Invite children to toss large balls into laundry baskets.
- Provide ping pong balls for the children to experiment.
- Provide balls of varying sizes and textures.
- Provide paper for the children to crumple into balls.
- Use various sizes and textures of balls to paint with.



Block Accessories

- Provide separate baskets of plastic lids, spools, etc to the block area.
- Attach the children's photos to existing wooden blocks.
- Attach familiar places (house, restaurant, school, center, playground, park, etc) to existing blocks or boxes added to the block area.
- Cover soap boxes with colored contact paper, add to block area.
- Attach Velcro strips to covered soap boxes.
- Attach (tape or glue) felt characters to wood blocks.
- Add plastic cups.
- Glue or tape sandpaper to wooden blocks to add "beach" atmosphere.
- Make blocks out of grocery sacks stuffed with newspaper.
- Create blocks using beverage cartons.

Box Tunnel

Open both ends of several large cardboard boxes. Line up the boxes in a row to make a long tunnel. Tape the boxes together for durability. Invite children to climb through the tunnel.

Carpet Square Puzzle

Place four identical carpet squares together on the floor to make a large square. Use a permanent felt-tip marker to draw a simple shape on the carpeting that covers all four squares. Mix the squares up and invite a child to put the puzzle together.

Catcher Gloves

Cut out pieces of the hook side of Velcro. Sew the pieces to the palm side of a pair of children's gloves or mittens. Invite children to put on the gloves and try to catch a foam ball.

Cymbals

Find two metal pie pans that are the same size. Nail a wooden knob or block to the outside of each pan.

Dish Pan Pull Toy

Cut a small hole under the rim of a plastic dishpan. Tie a knot in the end of three-foot rope. Thread the unknotted end of the rope through the hole and make a loop at the end for a handle. Invite children to give their favorite doll or toy a ride.

Funny Feet

Collect macaroni and cheese boxes. Trim boxes to fit child's feet. Cut duck or frog feet out of poster board and glue them to your trimmed boxes. Poke a hole in each side of box and tie a piece of elastic through the holes to hold child's feet in place. Waddle or hop along!

Inner Tube Toss

Inflate an inner tube and hang it from a clothesline at the children's level (or just from the ceiling). Set out several bean bags or small balls. Invite the children to toss the bags or balls through the tube. Assorted sizes of inner tubes can also be used as a large stacker.

Laundry Basket Basketball

Set out a laundry basket or two. Provide small foam balls or crumbled up newspaper. Invite the children to throw the balls into the laundry baskets. Encourage the children to vary their distance from the baskets.

Laundry Basket Train

Tie three laundry baskets together with brightly colored ribbon to create a laundry basket train. Add a handle to the first basket. Invite children to pull stuffed animals and dolls around the room in the train.

Metal Box Shaker

Find a metal container with a lid. Put bells, paper clips, rice, key, or anything else in the container and glue the lid closed. Experiment with the contents to create different noises.

Paper Plate Toss

Provide small paper plates for the children to toss onto a carpet square.

Pull Toys

Pull toys can be made from a variety of inexpensive, readily available materials.

- Cylindrical box such as an oatmeal or salt box
- Wicker basket
- Plastic container
- Cords
- Yarn
- Elastic
- Box with attached lid or with lid removed



- Set of bracelets
- Macrame cord
- Thin plastic rope
- Ribbon
- Decorations
- Colorful self-stick paper
- Glued-on magazine pictures covered with clear self-stick paper stickers
- Crayon or felt-tip marker drawings
- Noisemakers such as bells, macaroni or dried beans securely tied to or packaged inside the toy

Rhythm Sticks

Provide cardboard tubes, wooden spoons or wooden dowels for rhythm sticks. Play a variety of music and invite children to play rhythm sticks to songs.

Sandpaper Blocks

Glue, tape or nail sandpaper to wood blocks.

Tossing Game

Provide the children with a dishpan and safe items such as bean bags to throw. Challenge the children by changing the distance of the dishpan.



Sensory Materials

Baker's Clay

4 cups flour
1 cup salt
1½ cups warm water

Mix all ingredients together. Store in airtight container.

Basic Play Dough

3 cups flour
1 cup salt
1 cup water
¼ cup vegetable oil

Knead all ingredients together. Store in airtight container.



Bubble Blowers

- Cut the bottom out of a small paper cup and discard. Dip the wide end of the cup into the bubble mixture and blow through the small end.
- Form one end of a pipe cleaner into a circle. Hold onto the other end, dip the circle into the bubble mixture and blow.
- Use a mesh strawberry basket to blow large quantities of bubbles at once.
- Poke a straw through the bottom of a paper cup. Insert top of cup into bubble mixture, blow through the straw.

Bubble Mixture

¼ cup liquid dish washing detergent
½ cup water
1 teaspoon sugar

Add a few drops of food coloring. Mix together in a shallow container. Allow the solution to age for a few days to make the bubble blowing easier.

Cloud Dough

6 cups flour
1 cup vegetable oil
1 cup water

Knead ingredients together. Final product will feel oily and very smooth. Store in airtight container.

Cooked Play Dough

1 cup flour
2 tsp. cream of tartar
Food coloring or Kool-Aid
½ cup salt
1 cup water
1 tbsp. vegetable oil

Combine flour, salt and cream of tartar in a saucepan. Mix liquids and gradually stir them into dry ingredients. When mixture is smooth, cook over medium heat stirring constantly until a ball forms. Remove from heat and knead until smooth. This is a very pliable and long-lasting play dough.

Goop

1 part cornstarch
1 part water
Food coloring or tempera paint (optional)

Mix cornstarch with water and optional color. Pour mixture onto a tray or mix in large tub. Variations: Add more cornstarch/water. What happens? Provide cookie cutters, cars, animals, etc., for child to use with Goop.

Kool-Aid Play Dough

$\frac{1}{2}$ cups salt
Food coloring, tempera paint, or Kool-Aid
2 cups flour
2 cups water
2 tbsp. vegetable oil
2 tbsp. alum

Combine salt and water in saucepan. Boil until salt dissolves. Remove from heat and tint with food coloring. Add oil, flour, and alum. Knead until smooth. This dough will last two months or longer if stored in airtight container.

Rainbow Stew

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup sugar
4 cups water
1 cup corn starch
Food coloring

Mix together all ingredients in a sauce pan. Stir constantly and heat until the mixture begins to thicken. Mixture will become a consistency like petroleum jelly. Remove from heat and let cool. Once cool, divide mixture and place in resealable bags. Variation: Add food coloring to rainbow stew. Invite children to squish the bags to combine colors.

Sand Combs

Cut rectangles out of heavy cardboard. Cut notches on one end of the rectangle. Vary the size and spacing of notches. Invite children to use cardboard to comb through the sand.

Sand Sifters

Collect containers of various sizes and shapes. Punch holes of varying sizes into bottoms of containers. Invite children to sift the sand using the containers. These sifters can also be used in a water table.



Sand Scoops

Clean and dry plastic bleach or detergent bottles. Put glue around the openings of the bottle and tightly screw on the lids. Cut off the bottom of the bottle at an angle. Smooth over any rough edges. Invite the children to scoop up the sand.

Sensory Bottles

Fill clear bottles with various items. Allow children to shake and roll the bottles. Ask questions about how movement affects the contents of the bottle. Experiment: Fill bottle only halfway with liquid, fill bottle completely full, combine fluids with other materials.

Filling ideas:

- Hair gel
- Karo Syrup & beads or wiggly eyes
- Flitter/glitter
- Rice
- Karo syrup
- Coffee grounds
- Water and oil
- Wiggly eyes
- Nuts (metal and/or natural)
- Beans
- Cotton balls
- Feathers
- Magnetic items
- Sand
- Vegetable oil and beads or marbles
- Macaroni



Silly Putty

2 cups white glue
1 cup liquid starch
Food coloring

Mix until it achieves the desired texture. If the silly putty is too sticky, add more starch. If the silly putty won't stick to itself, it needs more glue. Add your choice of food coloring with the starch.

Squish Bags

Use sturdy resealable plastic bags. Put one bag inside the other. Fill inside bag with various materials and invite children to participate in this non-messy sensory experience!

Filling ideas: Flour, salt, dried beans, sand, mud, hair gel, hair mousse, corn starch, corn meal, pom poms, etc. Try mixing fillings together, such as hair gel and wiggly eyes, or beans and corn starch.

Texture Pillows

Create small pillows out of different textures of fabric. For example, you could make pillows out of nylon, cotton, corduroy, fake fur, flannel and denim. Invite children feel the different textures of each pillow.



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