

ACTIVITY MANUAL **DO IT YOURSELF**



INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE MANUAL



This manual is designed to show you that even without industrial games, it's possible to use everyday objects, recycled materials and sometimes even nothing at all to create and imagine games, toys and activities that will stimulate child's development.

Safety must always be your priority, both in design and in everyday practice, and that's why it's essential to wash the materials you're going to use thoroughly, especially when there were before products in them, checking every day that the games and toys are in good condition, and washing them too after use.

Obviously, not all toys and games are suitable for all ages, or even for the same number of children, given the size of the objects and the abilities they require.

Some activities require you to play with 1 to 4 children maximum, seated at a table with a caregiver for a set period of time (especially with small objects, rubber bands, etc.). Others, such as cardboard boxes, can be left in the room for the children to play with freely all day long.

It's possible to create various activities that will help the child to progress in various areas of development according to their own rhythm : fine motricity skills, gross motor skills, coordination eyes-hand movement, manage emotions, develop 5 senses, cause and effect, imagination and creativity...

Sometimes, you just need your voice, and some imagination

Little reminder of games and activities to play without any materials.

Talk: ask them questions, talk about the emotions you observe and that they go through, talk about what you do on a daily basis in the nursery, name body parts, objects in the environment...

Singing: with different voices, different volumes of sound, without words, with music behind it or not, to give the children energy when they're awake, or to soothe them and help them to fall asleep when they're tired...

Imitate sounds: ask children to imitate animal cries, the sounds of nature, transport...

Mimic: ask children to mimic animals, objects, people, the environment...

Jacadi says: start a sentence with Jacadi and give instructions (jump, touch nose, raise arm...). If you don't say Jacadi, the children must not move.

1,2,3 SUN: someone counts to 3 with eyes closed. As he counts, the other children move forward behind him to get closer. When he has finished, he turns around and the other children must still stand. If he sees them moving, they return to the starting line. The first to touch the counting child without being seen wins.

Color wolf: naming colors, children must go and touch something in the room or garden of the same color.

Dance: ask the children to dance, play music or sing along.

Invent stories: tell stories, use gestures, change voice intonations...

And much more

CREATE A SENSORY BOTTLE

To use from 6 months



Benefits to create a sensory bottle:

- Easy to create by the families and ECCD, and non-expensive.
- Awaken the senses : sight, touch, hearing.
- Develop fine motor skills
- Discovering the links between cause and effect (the baby understands that by shaking the bottle it makes noise, that by overturning it the objects move inside...)
- To awake curiosity and encourage the ability to concentrate.
- Helping children calm down and manage their emotions when they are excited or angry.

What do you need?

Little plastic bottles, hot glue, water, oil...

Non-exhaustive list of objects or materials that can be used to create sensory bottles : glitters, rocks, sand, bottle caps, little wooden sticks, pieces of broken toys or objects, elastic bands, seashells, capsules, feathers, ropes, tissues, fabrics...

You can put the objects directly inside with or without water and close with hot glue.

You can also fill the bottle with $\frac{3}{4}$ of water, $\frac{1}{4}$ of oil or glycerin, add some food coloring and glitters and watch the magic happening.

SOME EXAMPLES

1. Red food coloring with laminating paper scrap
2. Green food coloring with plastic pieces of a broken toy
3. Bottle caps
4. Little marbles from a broken toy
5. Red food coloring with glitters



Suggest a list of materials to bring back to the participants. The goal is not necessarily to buy but to use materials that we already have or to recycle them rather than throw them away when possible.

You can also create the bottle with your toddler, it will be more significant for him/her and s/he will appreciate choosing the color, the objects inside and to do an activity with you!



Always check that there is no leak from the bottle, especially from the cap, and that it's closed in such a way that the child cannot open it. Babies will first discover them by putting it in their mouths, and we don't want small, easily swallowed objects to escape, or products inside to be drunk.

CREATE A BUSYBOARD

To use from 6 months



Benefits to create a busy board :

- Easy to create and not expensive
- Better understand everyday objects and how to use them in a funny way.
- To develop fine motor skills, intellectual development, memory and concentration.
- Improving the coordination of movements, especially those of the hands and eyes.
- Sensory learning thanks to the different shapes and colors of the objects contained in the game.
- A better concentration and the development of his logic, it pushes the child to resolve some problems and improves as such its self-confidence.

How to create a busyboard ?

Choose a sanded wood board that is safe for the child and attach various objects and materials with strong glue or screws.

SOME EXAMPLES

Non-exhaustive list to objects to put on a busy board:

- A pipe to make balls fall in
- Zip, lockers, interrupters to practice
- Bottle caps and wheels to turn
- Clothespins to hang
- Remote control, calculator, phone to press the buttons.
- Papers and fabrics with different textures to touch
- Fabrics or objects with scratches
- Roller paint to roll, paintbrush
- Musical toy
- Belt, roller for pastry
- Bottles opening...



The child and its needs change, therefore it is important to adapt the board to his/her age.



Check regularly to make sure items are secure and not broken. Be careful if the board is just placed and not fixed so that it can not fall down on babies and children when they play with it.

CONTRAST CARDS WITH BABIES

To use from birth



At birth, a baby's vision is blurred, at around 2 months s-he begins to be able to fix and follow with his-her eyes objects placed at about 10 centimeters from his-her head. S-he begins to discern very contrasting colors, first white and black, then red and green.

Benefits to use contrast cards with babies:

- Smooth vision development
- Encouraging the development of different senses
- Encourage him-her to raise his-her head, to push on his-her arms and legs to move forward, and get on all fours, and thus to build up his-her muscles

No computer or printer ? No problem.

Just draw and color contrasting shapes yourself with a black marker or felt pen on a white sheet of paper. You can after to wrap it in transparent scotch tape.

SOME EXAMPLES

How to use contrast cards ?

- Give it to the baby
- Place the cards on the carpet around baby but out of reach to encourage him to move
- Hang them on the walls (and ceiling!) near baby's crib, changing table, bathtub, where you nurse or feed, and wherever baby will spend time
- Hang some in the car for baby to look at while s-he's in his-her car seat
- Hang some from a mobile
- Put some in a picture frame or flip-board for baby to look at while s-he's doing tummy time



Switch them out regularly to keep the baby interested and engaged !

Start with simple shapes, then as the weeks go by continue with more elaborate shapes



Make sure **that the edges and corners of the cards are not sharp** or pointed so that the baby can't hurt him-herself with ! You can give it the shape of a circle to avoid any injury.

FREE PLAY (INSIDE)

LET'S SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING IF WE PUT THIS INSIDE...



Ideas of recycled objects to put in the room to let the children play freely with it and transforming it in new toys while improving their fine motor skills, stimulate their 5 senses and develop their creativity:

PLASTIC BOTTLES



Put a box with a lot of different empty and clean plastic bottles of different shapes and sizes. Be aware not to lose the caps when you remove the bottles so the babies are not swallowing it

PIPES



Put some different clean pipes of roadworks inside or outside and watch what's happening.

CARDBOARD



Keep all the cardboard, boxes from objects, toys, cereals, eggs...and set them up in a random way. Children can use it in many different ways: construction blocks, creating houses for dolls, places where to hide in, throwing balls on it ...

SHADOW PLAY



Create a dark corner in a room (the nap room if no one is sleeping; turn off the lights in the activity room after lunch...) and use a flashlight to show the shadows of different objects, toys, children... You can also tell them a story with the shadows of your hands or just let them discover by themselves the contrast with light and shadow.

ROLLING PAPER



Put a box of cardboard rolls in the room.

FABRICS



Put a lot of different fabrics on a box and let them play with it.

PAPERS



Don't throw paper you don't use anymore in the trash can, keep it and put some in the room to let the children use it the way they want. Some may tear it up which is a good alternative for kids who pull each other's hair.

BAMBOO



Cut pieces of bamboo, and put it in the room so the children can play with it.

DRAWING TRAY



Put sand or a similar texture on a tray and ask the children to draw, create shapes with their fingers in it.

SOCKS



Create puppets by filling socks or fabrics.

USED STRAWS



Keep used straws and wash them carefully. Put a lot of different straws of different sizes and cut some (but never too small to avoid risk of swallowing). You can put a box of it on a table and observe how the children will use it. You can add string so the children can try to put the string on the straw and work on their fine motor skills.

COLORED TOILET PAPER



Collect paper rolls and paint them in different colors. Cut slits in the rolls so that the rolls can fit together. Many constructions are possible.

FREE PLAY (OUTSIDE)

LET'S SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING IF WE PUT THIS OUTSIDE



Ideas of recycled objects to put outside to let the children play freely with them and transforming them into new toys while improving their gross motor skills and developing their creativity:

ROLLING BOTTLE



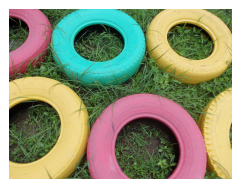
Keep some big and empty water canisters and put them outside.

BIG BOWLING



Collect milk powder cans, cans of food and leave them out for the children. They will be able to roll them, to stack them. By leaving balls next to them, they can also try to make them fall.

TYRES FOR MOTRICITY



Outside you can put tires of different sizes (from bicycle, motorcycle, cars, trucks...) for the child to climb on, and use them as a motricity skills course.

SIEVES ACTIVITY



Leave sieves available outside. Children can find outside grass, strings, flowers to insert in the holes.

BOTTLE BOWLING



Same principle as with the cans but this time with bottles (with a bottom of water in them to make them stand upright and create sensations for the children when they handle them) which can be arranged like skittles or used differently by the children.

STILTS



Recover large, thick, solid metal cans (e.g., baby formula cans). Drill holes on each side and pass string through them. Children can climb on them and try to walk on them as if they were on stilts.

CHALK WALK



Draws with chalks different shapes, animals, games on the ground.

DIFFERENT ROADS



Create shapes with tape on the floor to create different routes for the children to take.

CREATE WATER PLAY

These activities will allow the child to experiment by him·herself with new textures and stimulates his·her senses.



Ideas for self-service recycled objects to let children play freely with and transform into new toys while improving their fine motor skills, stimulating their 5 senses and developing their creativity:

SENSORIAL ICE CUBES

Coordination, Sensoriality, Creativity, Experience

How to do it ?

Create some ice cubes in the freezer.
You can mix water with different food coloring, glitters...
Put a large basin outside with tempered water on it.
Give the ice cubes to the children and let them play with, the ice cubes will slowly melt, and release colored water, glitters...
If you can make big ice cubes, you can also hide little objects in them (not too small so they cannot swallow it), flowers...

You can also give a piece of paper to the children and give them ice cubes with food coloring inside so they can discover by themselves the colors on paper.



GO FISHING

Fine motor skills

In a basin of water place scrunchies, bracelets, curtain rod rings (not too small as children can swallow them). Next to them, place chopsticks, spoons, etc., so that the children can try to catch the objects in the water with these instruments.



THE FAKE LAUNDRY

Role play, sensorial, fine motor skills

Put water in a basin. Give pieces of cloth, towels, doll clothes to the children and let them play with them in the water. Provide clothespins and rope for the children to hang their clothes on. This will work on their fine motor skills while having fun.



SENSORIAL BAGS

Curiosity, imagination, 5 senses

In a freezer bag closed so that children cannot open it, put glitter, hair gel, buttons, seeds, pieces of fabric, pompoms, elastics, beads, and colorful liquid soap. These sensory bags can be taped to the floor, wall or table for the day. Check it regularly to make sure that they are not pierced.

You can also suggest that they close their eyes, pass their hand over the bag and say what they are touching and feeling.



WATER BOX

Role-playing, sensoriality, fine motor skills

Set up a basin of water and provide the children with egg cartons that they can manipulate, tear, and dip in the water while observing and feeling the different sensations under their fingers.



YOGHURT CUP

Fine motor skills

Set out basins of water with yogurt pots and bottle caps. The children can freely play games of filling, decanting and discovering the objects that float and those that sink with water.



WATER BOTTLE

Put some water bottles of different sizes in a basin full of water. Make some holes in some bottles to give a strainer effect. Let the children play freely with it.



SPONGE

Give sponge and a basin of water



FILLING, THREADING AND TRANSFERRING GAMES

Fine motricity, 5 senses, coordination eyes-hands



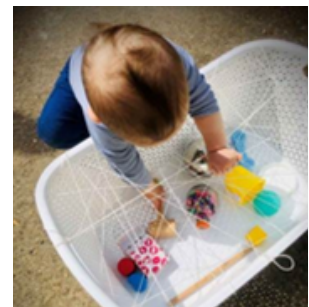
SANDED KITCHEN

Collect all kinds of jars, bottles, spoons, colanders and boxes with or without lids and put them in a bin with sand.



THE SPIDER'S WEB

Put games or objects in the bottom of a basin or box. Put string inside to create a spider web. The child can have fun trying to catch and get the objects out of the box with the difficulty created by the strings.



BEAD STRINGING

Collect paper rolls, decorate them with different colors and cut them into different sizes. Put them in a box for the children with laces or string. The children can have fun stringing them like big beads.



LITTLE WORMS

Set up colanders on a table or on the floor with different strings.



STRAW STRINGING

Same principle as the previous activity but this time with straws. Collect lots of straws that you clean properly and cut into different sizes. You can also ask the children to cut it under your watch. Put them in a box with string. The kids can have fun stringing them like beads. Be sure to collect all the straws in the box at the end of the activity.



THE RING GAME

Creates rings and a stand on which children can have fun aiming to throw the rings.



COLORS GAME

Create simple games where children have to match the same colors



DISCOVERING PAINTING, EXPERIMENTING WITH TEXTURES AND COLORS



**WITH HANDS
AND FEET**



WITH A SPRAY

**WITH A
PAINTBRUSH**



**WITH A PAINT
ROLLER**



**BY BLOWING IN A
STRAW**



WITH A BALLOON



CLEAN PAINT

Put different colors of paint on a white paper.

Put the paper in a ziploc bag and close it carefully.

Stick it to a table or a window and let the children discover the mix of colors by touching it.

STIMULATE THE BABY'S DEVELOPMENT



Talking to babies



The main stimulation for babies remains the look and the fact to talk to him/her.

Name the things a child looks at or points to. Encourage a child to point at different items, or let them guide your finger and see what interests them. You can name different parts of a toy, like "wheels" and "door".

Start naming things even before a child can speak. Their young brain is soaking up the sounds, tones, and language they'll use to say their first words.

Babies love faces. They're watching your mouth, hearing your voice and these are all early tools for talking.

Smile and laugh with them. Even before a baby is able to speak, they communicate through sounds and movements. Initiate a conversation by imitating baby's sounds or gestures. At this age, the tone of your voice is much more than words, so make you sound fun and use a sing-song voice.

Contrast cards



There are many ways to use contrast cards depending if you want to stimulate the coordination, the vision, the motricity... Here some examples:

- Give them to the baby
- Place the cards on the carpet around baby but out of reach to encourage him to move
- Hang them on the walls (and ceiling!) near baby's crib, in the baby's room
- Hang a few on a mobile
- Put some in a picture frame or flip-board for baby to look at while he's doing tummy time

Sensorial bottles



How to use sensorial bottles?
Many ways also to use them:



- You can just put some around in the room so s/he can go grab it whenever s/he wants.
- When the baby is on his/her belly you can put some bottles out of his/her reach to encourage him/her to use his knees and arms to move on and reach them.
- When the baby is on his back you can put the bottle next to him/her to encourage to turn on his belly by him/herself.



Peek-a-boo



Peekaboo is great activity to help them develop the sense of “object permanence”. This is the understanding that you don't just disappear from the world when they can no longer see you.

Cover your face with your hands (or a cloth) and pop out back into the view.

Look at me!

Ahh... peek-a-boo! Peek-a-boo! I see you!

Naming body parts



Touch different body parts on a baby and name them at the same time. That way, a baby will start to connect what you say with where you touch. A baby starts to learn about themselves, as well as hears new words.

Try it out:

Where're your toes? There're your little toes.

There's your nose!

Where's your chin? There it is!

You can play with older children asking them to show you where's their nose, mouth, eyes. Even when children don't speak yet they can point to their body parts showing you that they understand what you say.

AND ALSO, OTHER GAMES:

TOYS

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

GUILI GUILI

BOXES

PUPPETS

READING BOOKS

SINGING SONGS