

ARTS AND CRAFTS FOR TODDLERS

Sandra writes:

Thank you for a wonderful site. I am a stay at home mom and I love everything about your site.

I was wondering, if you could please give me some advice? My little girl is 2 and I am not sure of the amount and quantity of the material that I need to supply when doing arts and craft projects with her.

Do I supply the whole box of crayons or just 2 to 3 colors at a time? What about paint. How much paint should I give her and how many colors of paint?

Your assistance in this regard will be highly appreciated!!

Jean replies:

You are right to question the level of art projects for your two year old. Art at this age is more about experimenting with safe materials and learning small muscle control than it is about creating beautiful art work.

As for crayons, one to three crayons is probably best. Be sure to provide thick crayons, since they will be easier for her to use. Also use large sheets of paper with toddlers because they will probably begin drawing by using their whole arms rather than just their fingers.

A tip for using paint, is to only use one color at a time at this age. Be sure that a small amount of paint is offered in a low wide (non-tip) container. Also, it is best to use wide tipped brushes.

When doing art projects with toddlers, think safe and think successful.

Do not give a toddler any art material that could harm them. No toxic materials and no small objects that could be swallowed.

Try not to give your child projects that are beyond her abilities. If your child does not like doing the project, it is probably because the project is just too hard for her to do. Don't give your toddler projects to do that end up with you doing all the work. 80% of the work should be done by the child.

Everyone wants to be successful, even two year olds.

Also, remember that a toddler has a very short attention span. If she loves doing the project, however, let her continue. If she wants to continue, it usually means that it is age appropriate and seems like fun to her. Doing things that she is good at, will help her to learn to increase her attention span.

Gluing – Start off with sticky paper and some simple cut paper shapes to stick on to it. Gradually go into simple projects such as; where your child spreads some glue across a piece of paper and then applies some confetti or cotton balls to the top of the glue.

Markers (non-permanent) – are usually easy for toddler. Sometimes it is fun to let your child draw with markers and then help her spray water over her picture. Watching the colors run, is exciting to a two year old.

Bingo Markers (non-toxic kind) – are easy for toddlers. A fun activity is to dip the marker in water and then have your child smash it down on a piece of paper. They love the way it sprays out, and ends up looking like a fireworks display.

Cutting – your child is too young to manipulate scissors. Instead plan projects that require her to tear paper. The easiest one of these is give her 1” strips of paper and then have her tear off sections, that can later be glued to paper for a collage.

Stamping (or making impressions) – have your child press a large stamp on a plate of paint and then have her make an impression on a piece of paper.

Painting – one of my most successful projects for toddlers, is to place a large flat leaf on a piece of newspaper. Give your child two colors of paint and have her paint however she wants across the leaf. Then pick up the leaf and lay it on a clean piece of paper and place another piece of paper on top. Then have your child rub across the top paper, so that a leaf impression will transfer to the bottom of the top paper. Bright colors and black paper make a dramatic picture.

I hope this helps, Jean Warren, Preschool Express