



PASTA PATTERNS

Making and wearing colorful pasta necklaces is a fun and creative way for your child to explore patterns.

Materials:

about 4 cups uncooked pasta with holes for stringing
 2 bowls
 1-cup measure
 food color
 rubbing alcohol
 mixing spoon
 string
 white glue
 scissors

Directions:

1. The night before you plan to make necklaces, color the uncooked pasta. Invite your child to use the 1-cup measure to put about 2 cups of the pasta into each bowl. Then add a different food color to each. Squeeze out a little color at a time and stir with a spoon until the pasta has some color on it. Then add a tablespoon of rubbing alcohol and mix until all the pasta is evenly coated. Let it dry overnight on a baking sheet lined with tinfoil.
2. Decide with your child how long to make the necklaces, then cut the string to those lengths, adding a little extra for the tie. Dip about an inch of one end of each string into the glue. Let dry overnight. (Once dry, the hardened tip makes it easier to string the pasta.)
3. Now you're ready to make pasta patterns! To start, string 6 or 8 pieces of pasta to make the simplest pattern of alternating colors (A-B-A-B). Then invite your child to do the same, and to tell you what color should come next in the pattern to keep it going, and next after that.
4. Use hearing a pattern to reinforce what you see. Say the colors out loud together ("red, blue, red, blue," for example) as you string them. It also helps to name the pattern. ("This is our red-blue-red-blue pattern.")
5. Continue making the pattern together until the string is filled, and then tie a knot to finish the necklace.
6. To start another necklace, invite your child to make a pattern for you to copy. And for fun, pretend to make a mistake so your child can correct you!

PASTA PATTERNS (continued)

Parent Pointers:

- This activity helps your child with creating and recognizing patterns, and with making predictions about what comes next.
- Help your child discover other patterns to make. Stick to simple ones at first. Other simple patterns: A-A-B-B-A-A-B-B and A-A-B-A-A-B.
- When making color patterns, the pasta should all be the same shape. Otherwise, the color repeats but the shapes may not, in which case you haven't made a pattern.
- For older children who want to create more complex patterns, use three or four colors, or, for a double pattern, use two colors and two pasta shapes. (For example, red and blue macaroni and red and blue penne.)