

In and Out Play

What is in and out play?

Developmental play skill where children explore their environment and place objects in and out of different containers.

Benefits of In and Out Play

- Improves fine motor skills, which is the ability to use the muscles in the hands.
- Helps develop eye-hand coordination, which is when the eyes and hands work together to complete a task.
- Improves bilateral coordination, which is the ability to use both hands together to complete a task.
- Teaches problem solving and cause and effect skills.
- Teaches the concept of in and out.
- Helps understand different sizes and shapes.

Milestones Related to In and Out Play

- Releases objects voluntarily between 9 and 10 months old
- Takes objects out of a container between 9 and 11 months old
- Puts objects into a container between 10 and 11 months old
- Puts three or more objects into a container between 12 and 13 months old
- Puts many objects into a container without removing any between 14 and 15 months old
- Puts tiny objects into a small container between 15 and 23 months old
- Places two shapes in shape sorter between 15 and 18 months old
- Places all shapes in shape sorter between 19 and 24 months old

Home Activities for In and Out Play

Tupperware Containers

- Gather Tupperware containers from your kitchen – they can be various shapes and sizes.
- Gather different materials that your child can put in the containers such as:
 - Cotton balls
 - Foods such as dried pasta, cereal, beans, puffs
 - Wine corks
 - Pouch tops
 - Buttons
 - Anything else in your home that is safe for your child
- Allow your child to explore placing these materials in and out of the containers.



Gum Containers

- Save your empty gum containers.
- Gather different materials that your child can put in the containers such as:
 - Cotton balls
 - Foods such as dried pasta, cereal, beans, puffs
 - Buttons
 - Coins
 - Anything else in your home that is safe for your child
- Allow your child to explore placing these materials in and out of the containers.



Large Cans or Containers

- Gather any large cans or containers such as a milk jug, Puffs container, Pringle can, coffee can, formula can, or anything of a similar shape or size.
- Gather different materials that your child can put in the containers such as:
 - Cotton balls
 - Foods such as dried pasta, cereal, beans, puffs
 - Wine corks
 - Pouch tops
 - Buttons
 - Popsicle sticks
 - Straws
- Allow your child to explore placing these materials in and out of the containers.



Wipes Containers and Tissue Boxes

- Use empty wipe containers or tissue boxes for child to put objects in and out of.
- Stuff materials such as scarves, cloths, tissue paper, or newspaper into the boxes and allow your child to pull it out.
- You can also put in a mix of different materials to them reach inside and see what they find.



Make a Shape Sorter

- Any large can or container such as a Puffs container, Pringle can, coffee can, formula can, or anything of similar shape and size can be made into a shape sorter.
- Gather items that you can use to put the containers such as:
 - Foods such as dried pasta, cereal, beans, puffs
 - Expired credit cards, gift cards, or IDs
 - Cotton balls
 - Wine corks
 - Pouch tops
 - Buttons
 - Popsicle sticks
 - Straws
 - Pipe cleaners
 - Q-Tips
- Cut a hole or slit in the top of the lid for the items to fit through – you can cut one hole or slit in the lid of several of different sizes.
- Allow your child to place the items into the container through the hole.



Muffin Tins, Ice Cube Trays, or Egg Cartons

- Items like muffin tins, ice cube trays, or egg cartons can be great for placing objects in and out of the holes and compartments.
- Gather items that you can use such as:
 - Foods such as dried pasta, cereal, beans, puffs
 - Cotton balls
 - Wine corks
 - Pouch tops
 - Buttons
 - Or anything else you may have at home that is safe for your child
- Allow your child to explore playing with these items and placing them in and out of the holes.



Plastic Water Bottles

- Save your empty plastic water bottles.
- Gather items that you can use to put the bottle such as:
 - Foods such as pasta, cereal, beans, rice
 - Wine corks
 - Popsicle sticks
 - Straws
 - Pipe cleaners
 - Q-Tips
- Let your child put items in and out of the bottle.



Reminder: Please be sure to supervise children at all times during these activities, as playing with small objects can be a choking hazard!

References

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