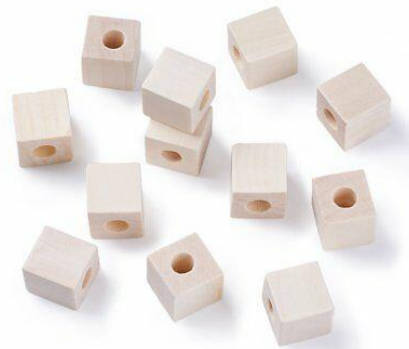


Bead threading for toddlers

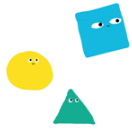
Bead threading is actually an enjoyable activity for all ages but for toddlers it is especially beneficial. It helps them develop their eye-hand coordination, concentration, the pincer grasp and actually all small muscles of the hand, thus refining their fine motor skills. It is also preparation for sewing and indirect preparation for writing. It can also inspire creativity.

Bead threading, like any skill, starts with basic abilities and is developed further by accepting greater challenges. For starters, for the younger ones, it would be great to have some wooden blocks, as big as to fit the child's palm, with a big hole in the middle. A cubical form is better for beginning than spherical because at first the child will drop them a lot and running after them around the room will break their concentration and furthermore, they might get bored with the activity quickly, as they see no result of doing it. Also, for the very beginning threading on a wooden stick would be a better idea. It is important for the child to have success, to feel capable of doing this activity and later they can move on to more challenging beads and more challenging threads.



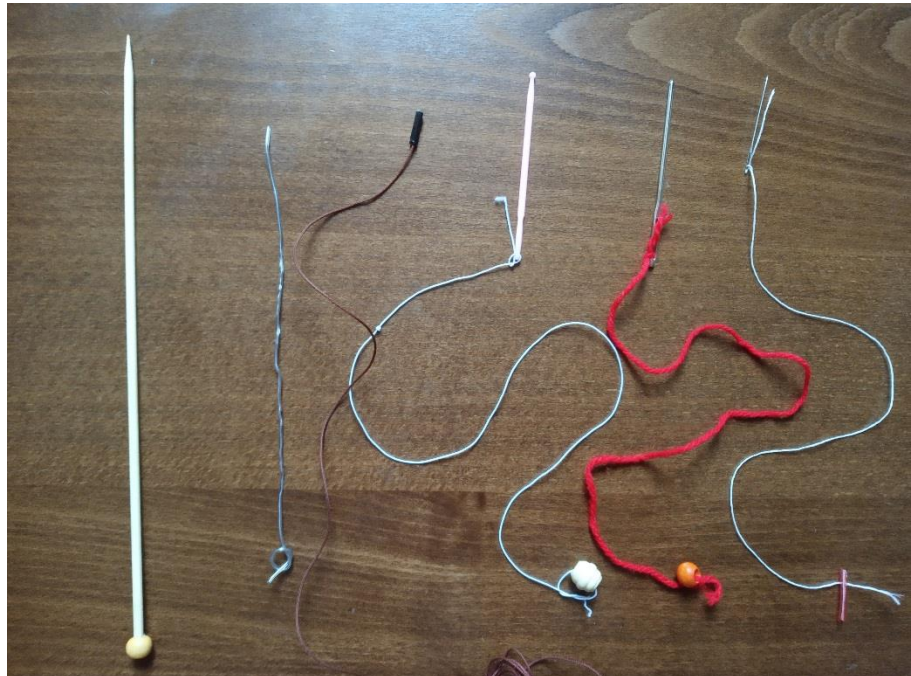
Changing one thing at a time would be good as this would leave the child with at least something familiar - the bead or the thread - and they will recognize the activity and will know how to do it even if you don't present it anymore. After the cubical beads the toddler may proceed to spherical ones, still on the same wooden stick. Then the stick can be substituted by a wooden skewer, which will be thinner, therefore a new challenge. Then they can try threading something smaller but still easy to grasp, for example foam beads. They are usually colourful and enjoyable. The toddler

may repeat this activity as many times as they want and they usually want to do it a lot. Following the same pattern beads will become more and more challenging, changing their shape and material. Sometimes simple rotation may bring new joy to bead threading for toddlers. They get bored using the same materials over and over again but this is an activity that can be periodically renewed by bringing new beads on the scene. Don't



throw away the old ones, just store them for some months and then bring them out again – they will be most probably appreciated anew.

As for the **thread**, you can build up by substituting the wooden skewer by a pipe cleaner (they come in various colours so you can also change the colour from time to time as your toddler is mastering the pipe cleaner), then a thick plastic string, a thin metal string, fishing cord, a shoelace, an elastic string, etc.



There are so many things that could be used as threads for bead threading! Eventually the toddler will get to the sewing thread. It is important for any thread to have an ending. The wooden stick must have for example a small non-detachable wooden ball on one end. The skewer may have some thick tape on one end. Anything would do, as long as the beads are not going through and it cannot be removed by the toddler. And all soft threads must end with a knot.

Another tool to be gradually introduced in the bead threading is the **needle**. The plastic ending of a shoe lace could be the first “needle” for the toddler. Later comes the real needle that is not sharp for a toddler and the thread is tied to the eye of the needle.

Once the toddler masters the threading skill, it is no longer a challenge and the desire for repetition fades away. Then the time comes for really producing pieces of jewelry and then the real imagination starts to develop.

Video: Veda, 1 year 11 months