

# Activity Ideas

## Rotating Bead Wheel

YD-E0271

©Yellow Door® 2025

This delightfully engaging, developmentally appropriate educational toy is safe for infants and toddlers and will inspire a range of sensory learning experiences. Watch with delight as the sparkling beads move and listen to the swooshing clitter-clatter sound. Babies and toddlers will develop hand-eye coordination as they turn the wheel and enjoy the gentle rain-like sound made by the beads.

Research shows that sensory play in the early years builds nerve connections in the brain's pathways. This beautifully crafted resource has been thoughtfully developed to maximize this special time in a child's development.



### Together time

To explore the Rotating Bead Wheel with a baby, take time to sit with them on your knee facing the wheel. Turn the wheel gently and watch the beads move.

- Can you hear the tinkling sound of the beads as they tumble? Talk about the sound they make. Does it sound like the rain falling? Is it making a pitter-patter sound?
- Or maybe it sounds like the waves gently lapping on the beach. Pretend you are walking along the beach as the waves lap your toes. Can you feel the sand between your toes?
- Look at baby's reflection in the mirror. Who is that? Can you see your eyes? Your nose? Your mouth?

Make this a gentle quiet time, maybe before a nap, or if you see that baby needs time to be calm and connect.

### All in a spin!

- With toddlers, spin the Rotating Bead Wheel and see how long it spins. Watch as it comes slowly to a stop.
- In a clear space ask the toddlers to spin themselves around. Can they spin for as long as the Rotating Bead Wheel? Let's try! Do this a few times spinning the wheel for gradually longer and longer times.

### Let the sunshine in

On a sunny day, place the Rotating Bead Wheel in a ray of sunshine. Together with the children, look at how the sun makes the beads sparkle. Take time to look at each color bead. Which is the most sparkly? Which color do they like best?



# Nursery rhyme time

There has been lots of research into the impact of nursery rhymes in the early years of childhood – it all shows a positive effect on reading and spelling. The repetitive nature of the rhymes is not only comforting, but also teaches us how language works and builds memory capability. The patterns of the verses make them memorable and easy to learn. Children encounter new words, developing their vocabulary skills, which in turn develops their inferencing and language comprehension skills. Who would have thought that learning songs like Humpty Dumpty would be developing such a breadth of skills?

Using the Rotating Bead Wheel to make rain-like sounds in the background, sing together:

*It's raining, it's pouring,  
The old man is snoring.  
He went to bed, and he bumped his head,  
And couldn't get up in the morning.*

You can add some actions and maybe some extra sound effects like snoring!



Other rain-themed songs you could sing include Incy Wincy Spider, Rain, Rain Go Away and I Hear Thunder.

## Find me a rainbow

Spin the Rotating Bead Wheel and ask the children to find something... green. This may be from a collection of different colored objects in a basket you have already prepared, or maybe walking around the room together to find something green. When you have found something, spin the wheel again and ask the children to find something... blue! And so on, until you have found all the colors.



Maybe add a little song (to the tune of 'Row, row, row your boat')

*Turn, turn, turn the wheel  
Watch it spin and spin  
Merrily, merrily, merrily  
If you find, you win!*

## Rotational schema

Schematic play happens when babies and toddlers repeat actions over and over, and so explore the world around them through play. Rotational schema is the exploration of things that turn, twirl, spin, roll and rotate. The Rotating Bead Wheel is perfect for young children enjoying the rotational schema; they can spin and twirl, rotate and rock it over and over again.

- Use this fascination as an opportunity for language development. Use different words to describe the activity.
- Use this interest as an opportunity to explore cause and effect. Can you make it spin faster/slower? What happens when you rock it? What sound do the beads make?
- Collect lots of things together that can turn, spin, roll and rotate. Children will enjoy exploring them all.

## Close your eyes and let's pretend...

You can use the Rotating Bead Wheel for quiet times of peaceful meditation with the children. Sit together on cushions so that everyone is comfortable. Maybe close your eyes too. As you move the wheel to and fro, start a little story where the sound is a key part. Here are a few story starters:

- It's raining but we are together inside a lovely big, green tent, wrapped-up warm. We can hear the rain pitter-patter and the drip, drip, drip outside but we are snuggly and warm inside.
- We are sitting together on a beach, and the waves are gently lapping against the shore. The sun is shining, and we can feel the heat of it on our skin. We are sitting on a brightly colored beach towel, with the sand beneath our toes. If we wiggle our toes the sand feels soft and squishy.
- We are standing on a bridge with Winnie-the-Pooh and Christopher Robin getting ready to play pooh sticks. The river is gently flowing under the bridge, and we can hear the sound of the water as it swooshes past the rocks.

### *Get talking – useful words*

Rotate, spin, twirl, rock, turn, fast, slow, colors, bright, sparkle, rainbow, sound, pitter-patter, swoosh, reflection, mirror

## Books about rain

*In the Rain* by Elizabeth Spurr

*Worm Weather* by Jean Taft

*Rain* by Sam Usher

*Puddle* by Hyewon Yum