



One Page Resource: Table Top Activities

Table top activities for young children.....

There are times during the PreK day when children's activities need to be slightly more contained than during center time.

Here are some ideas for table top activities that are developmentally appropriate, promote child-led open ended exploration, and are quick and easy to set up and clean up!

These activities can be helpful when starting the day (transitioning into the classroom), for small group times, and for "lag times" before going outdoors. They can also be intentionally set-up as choices for children during center time.

Manipulatives –

Put out manipulatives such as counting bears, buttons, or pattern blocks. And pattern cards, sorting trays, or different types of containers. Encourage the children to sort and categorize the items in their own ways. Add additional small materials as needed based on the children's needs and interests.

Playdough –

See NM PreK one-pager on Play Dough for some fun ideas!

Clay –

See NM PreK one-pager on clay for some fun ideas!

Table Drawing –

Plan out individual pieces of plain paper or a big piece to cover the table for collaborative drawing. Provide a variety of markers, pens, colored pencils, regular pencils, and crayons. At the start of the year fatter writing utensils might be easier for the children. Later try introducing finer point markers and pens and slimmer pencils. You may want to revisit these table drawings with the children over several days. For example, use crayons one day then another day use water colors. Discover how the crayons resist the water color. Explore and have fun!

Legos –

Provide Legos on a big piece of material or paper covering the table. Using a table covering cuts down the noise and makes it easy to clean up the Legos. Depending on the children's fine motor abilities, you can put out the bigger Legos at the beginning and add or replace them with smaller Legos later. Add additional toy accessories as needed such as small animals, paper and markers, popsicle sticks, pieces of material, counting bears.

Writing –

Provide paper and writing tools as in the table drawing activity but encourage children's writing. Provide laminated cards with children's names on them. Children use these cards to practice writing their names and their friends' names. Some teachers add photos to the names of a symbol the child had chosen, so the child can recognize his or her name more easily-especially in the beginning of the year. As the children progress in their writing skills, you may choose to add other familiar words printed on cards for children to refer to. Encourage experimentation with letter writing. Provide or make envelopes. Add a few stamps and ink pads as needed.