

## Busy and Happy a collection of ideas

### Older Babies & Toddlers

- A snack in the high chair
- A snack in a muffin tin (they can move their snack from liner to liner, taking bites here or there but mostly playing!)
- A tub of rice and scoops/cups
- Chunky toddler puzzles
- A small plastic tub with a hole cut out of the center that he can push pom-poms through
- A pringles can with holes punched in the top to stuff pipe cleaners in
- Chunky crayons with a piece of paper taped on the high chair tray
- A paintbrush and a small dish of water (to be used in the high chair; this also works as a fabulous outdoor activity with fat brushes and a bucket of water- tell them to "paint the deck" while you read!)
- A spoon and a big bowl of yogurt (if you're brave!)
- Plastic easter eggs in an egg carton to take in and out.
- Building Blocks
- A collection of shoe boxes in different sizes (because all babies love boxes!)

### Preschoolers

- Eating (read to your kids while they eat lunch and take advantage of having a quiet captive audience!)
- Sensory tub with cups/spoons, funnels, etc. You can just use a large shallow plastic container for this. Some ideas for what to put inside: water/dish soap (bubbles!), rice, dried beans, sand, dried pasta.
- Coloring (pull out those special pencils or makers that are set aside just for read-aloud time)
- A Busy Box: gather a special toys into a small shoe box and use this box only for read-aloud times. Some ideas to get you started- sticker/activity books, Etch-a-Sketch, animal-shaped magnets for the fridge, toob figurines, pipe

- cleaners & pony beads, lacing cards and string, geoboards (you can make these yourself), sticker sheets and blank paper, a bag full of buttons for sorting
- Color-by-number activities
- Washable paint doobers and a big sheet of paper (or a dobber coloring book)
- Bubbles outside on the lawn
- Puzzles
- Finger Knitting
- Art paper covering the entire table
- Play dough, Model Magic, or Moonsand

### Older Fidgety Folks

- Legos
- Knitting or Crochet
- Hand Sewing
- Whittling (do you dare?) :)
- Cross-stitch
- Coloring (Dover Publications makes beautiful coloring books that older kids will enjoy)
- Watercolor
- Clay with special tools (they really make a difference)
- Hand sewing
- Finger Knitting
- Simple crafts (craft kits from stores like Michaels or Hobby Lobby come in handy here)
- Exercise ball (I think this idea is genius! Don't let them hop and be disruptive, but they can use their core muscles to stabilize and that will help them focus.)
- How-to-draw books
- Models (airplanes, cars, etc)
- Card-making (have them use magazines or colored paper to collage scenes- like snowy landscapes or a Christmas tree and packages- onto the front of blank cards; use these for thank-yous)
- Folding laundry (Oh yes! They can!) :)
- Making fleece blankets (you can find easy tutorials for no-sew blankets online-- then donate these to a local charity or give them as gifts)