

Bead Embroidery

Embroidery ain't your grandma's art anymore -- jazz up a traditional fabric embellishment with sparkly beads! Embroidery can be adapted to a number of cool designs and looks great on any garment.

What You Need:

- Light-colored fabric
- Thread
- Sewing needle
- Beads, various colors, shapes
- Graphite pencil

What You Do:

1. Help your child choose a fabric to embroider. Light-colored fabrics work best -- the lighter the color, the better the beads will show up.
2. Your child should decide what shape she wants to make out of beads. For example, she may want to create a ladybug, flower, her own initials, tree, peace sign, heart, butterfly, or other shape.
3. Allow her to draw the shape she wishes to create using a graphite pencil on the fabric. (Pencil marks can be erased later by gently washing the fabric with light detergent and water.)
4. Assemble the beads for your child to choose. She can use beads in various colors and sizes for different parts of the design, or use all the same color bead or same shape bead.
5. Prepare a sharp sewing needle with sewing thread as you would for regular sewing. Use the largest sewing needle possible make sure it fits through the smallest bead holes that you have. Tie a knot at the end of the thread, perhaps with a small bead to hold the knot in place behind the fabric if needed.
6. Show your child how to sew from the back of the fabric to the front -- poke the needle through the back of the fabric. When it comes out the other side, add a bead to the needle and pull the thread through. Poke the needle back through the front of the fabric and pull it from the back (she may need to hold the bead in place as she performs this step). The bead ends up laying flat on the surface of the fabric, starting to fill the penciled design!
7. Have her continue this process (it can be time consuming -- embroidery is a great exercise in both art and patience!) until her design is filled with beads. The final knot, with a bead to hold the knot in place if needed, goes behind the fabric.
8. Now she can enjoy her handmade creation, beaded with love!

