

Craft Your Own Carnival! Make Juggling Balls

Craft a carnival in your home by making your own juggling balls with this simple needle-and-thread activity. Sewing is a great way for your child to practice her spatial analysis and measurement skills while making something she can use over and over again. Your child will have loads of fun making and playing with these jugglers as she entertains the whole family with your sewing and juggling prowess!

What You Need:

- 1/8 yard each of three different lightweight, durable fabrics (such as sweatshirt fleece)
- Scissors
- Sewing/dressmaker pins
- Needle
- Thread
- Filling for the balls, such as lentils or rice



What You Do:

1. Have your child use scissors to cut a rectangle of fabric that is about 8" long and between 2 1/2" and 3" wide.
2. In alternating colors, help your child cut two fabric squares that are 2 1/2" by 2 1/2".
3. Working with your child, turn the long fabric rectangle to the underside (the side that won't be seen for the finished product) and pin the two narrow ends together. You will be working with what will eventually be the inside of the juggling ball for most of the construction.
4. There will be one open space at each end of the pinned rectangle. Using more pins, secure the underside of one fabric square to each open end.
5. Help your child thread a needle and secure it at the end by tying several knots in the thread.
6. Starting at one end, help your child thread the needle through the corner of one point where the square patch meets the rectangle. Aid your child in sewing the two pieces of fabric together all the way around. When the square patch is securely sewn on, tie off the end of the thread and cut it.
7. Repeat this procedure with the other square patch. Both patches should now be securely sewn to the fabric rectangle, and the only remaining open space should be the side where the two narrow ends of the long fabric rectangle meet.
8. Help your child remove all pins from the juggling ball, and turn it inside out. This is the "right" way for the juggling ball to appear.
9. Let your child scoop rice or lentils into the juggling ball to fill it almost full.
10. Help your child thread the needle and secure the end one more time. She should pass the needle through one corner of the open end and tuck the two sides of fabric to the inside as she sews the last side closed and secures the thread at the end.
11. Repeat the entire procedure for the remaining two juggling balls.

These soft bean-bag balls are useful for many activities besides juggling. Your child can use them as hacky sacks, to play a bean-bag toss game, or as mini basketballs. Or create your own carnival and put on a show for the whole family!