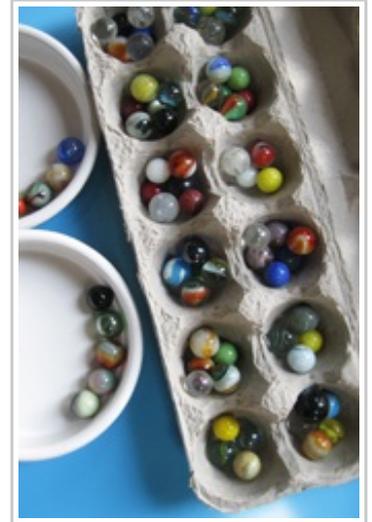


Play Mancala

This classic game of strategy traces its roots to Africa. It's available in toy and game stores with a sturdy wooden board, but your child can craft a homemade version that works just fine with an egg carton and a few beads! Before you know it, she'll boost her strategy skills to become an expert at the traditional rules. Then, she can get creative and come up with her own twist!

What You Need:

- Egg carton
- Two small bowls or boxes
- 48 beads, coins, seeds, or other small objects



What You Do:

1. Give the beads, coins, or other objects to your child, and have him place four objects in each trough of the egg carton.
2. Have her place one small bowl or box at each narrow end of the egg carton. These start out empty.
3. The game is played with two players, and the object of the game is to capture as many beads (or other objects) as you can.
4. To play, choose who goes first with a quick round of rock-paper-scissors. The first player picks up the beads from any trough on his side and carries them clockwise, dropping one bead in each subsequent trough. The bowl or box to that player's right—called his *store*—also gets a bead dropped in it. Each player skips the opposing player's store.
5. The player's turn is over unless the last bead he drops lands in his store. If it does, the player gets another turn, starting from wherever he wants. Once the player's turn is over, the opposing player gets a turn.
6. Whenever a player lands a bead in an empty trough, he gets to collect the opposing player's beads in the trough opposite the one he landed in. The opponent's beads and his last bead get placed in his store.
7. Play continues in this way until one player is out of beads on his side. He then gets to collect the opposing player's remaining beads. The player with the most beads in his bowl or box at the end of the game, wins.

Since the first player sometimes has an advantage in Mancala, make sure to alternate who goes first when you play. Keep the game board and beads together by shutting the egg carton tightly and storing it that way while you aren't playing.