

# Peg Play Party for Oliver, Mila, & Reggie

## Materials Needed

- A basket or bowl of clothespins (pegs). Colorful plastic or wooden pegs work best.
- A sturdy, empty cardboard box (like a shipping box).
- Markers or crayons (especially in colors that match your pegs).
- A separate, flat piece of cardboard.
- String or yarn.
- Two chairs or other stable anchor points.
- Optional: Small items to hang, like socks, scraps of fabric, or doll clothes.

## Learning Objectives

This lesson is designed to be play-based and exploratory. The main goals are for Oliver, Mila, and Reggie to:

- **Develop Fine Motor Skills:** Practice and strengthen the pincer grasp (using thumb and index finger) by squeezing pegs open and closed.
- **Improve Hand-Eye Coordination:** Practice clipping pegs onto various surfaces like a box edge or a string.
- **Explore Early Concepts:** Engage with color matching and one-to-one correspondence in a fun, pressure-free way.
- **Build Focus:** Engage in short, child-led activities that encourage concentration.

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### Part 1: The Discovery Basket (5 Minutes)

**Goal:** To spark curiosity and allow for free exploration.

1. Place all the clothespins into a single basket and cover it with a small blanket to create a "mystery."
2. Gather the children and say with excitement, "I have a surprise for Oliver, Mila, and Reggie! What do you think is hiding in our basket?"
3. Let one of them pull the blanket off to reveal the colorful pegs.
4. Allow a few minutes for free play. They might want to simply pick them up, drop them, listen to the sounds they make, or move them from one container to another. This tactile exploration is a crucial first step.

### Part 2: Feed the Hungry Box Monster (10 Minutes)

**Goal:** To practice the clipping motion in a fun, imaginative game.

1. Take your cardboard box and draw a simple, silly monster face on one side.
2. Announce, "This is the Hungry Box Monster! He is very, very hungry, and his favorite food is pegs! He likes to eat them all around his edges."
3. Demonstrate how to feed him. Pick up a peg, squeeze it open with an exaggerated "SQUEEZE!" sound, and clip it onto the top edge of the box with a loud "CHOMP!"
4. Invite the children to feed the monster too. Hand them pegs and encourage them to clip them

anywhere on the box's edge.

5. **Teacher Tip:** Hold the box steady for them. Celebrate every attempt, whether they succeed or not! The focus is entirely on the fun of squeezing and trying to clip.

### Part 3: The Colorful Hedgehog (10 Minutes)

**Goal:** To introduce color matching in a creative and hands-on way.

1. On the flat piece of cardboard, draw the simple outline of a hedgehog's body.
2. Using your markers, draw several large, colorful dots along the hedgehog's back where its spikes would be. Use 2-3 colors that you have matching pegs for (e.g., red, yellow, blue).
3. Show the children the drawing and say, "Oh no, our little hedgehog is missing his colorful spikes! Can we help him?"
4. Pick up a colored peg and say, "I have a **red** peg. Does the hedgehog have a **red** spot?" Find the matching red dot and clip the peg right onto it.
5. Encourage the children to find a peg and match it to a dot of the same color. You can help by saying, "Mila, can you find the blue spot for your blue spike?" or "Reggie, that looks like a yellow peg! Where does it go?"

### Part 4: The Tiniest Laundry Line (5-10 Minutes)

**Goal:** To connect peg-play to a real-world task and refine coordination.

1. Tie the piece of string between two low, stable points (like the legs of two chairs) to create a toddler-height laundry line.
2. Place the small fabric scraps, socks, or doll clothes in a pile.
3. Demonstrate how to hang one of the "tiny clothes" on the line and secure it with a peg. Narrate your actions: "Let's hang up this little sock. I'll use a peg to hold it tight. \*Clip!\*"
4. Let the children have a turn hanging the laundry. This is a fantastic challenge for their hand-eye coordination.

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## Wrap-Up & Clean-Up Game (5 Minutes)

Turn clean-up into the final game. Sing a simple song while you all work together to put the pegs back into their basket. Dropping them in and hearing the "clunk" is part of the fun!

*(To the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat")*

Pick, pick, pick the pegs,  
Put them in the box.  
Red and yellow, green and blue,  
What a helpful crew!

## Differentiation and Inclusivity

- **For a child who finds squeezing difficult:** Gently use a hand-over-hand approach to help them feel the motion. You can also pre-open the peg slightly for them, so they only need to do the final part of the squeeze. Celebrate the effort!
- **For a child who masters clipping easily:** Introduce a simple pattern challenge on the box monster ("red peg, blue peg, red peg...") or ask them to count the pegs as they clip them on

("One... two... three pegs!").

- **Adapting for Interest:** If one child loves the monster game but isn't interested in the hedgehog, that's okay! Allow them to continue with the activity that engages them most. The goal is joyful learning, not rigid progression.

## Assessment (Informal Observation)

While the children play, just watch and take mental notes:

- **Grasp:** How are they holding the pegs? Are they trying to use their thumb and pointer finger?
- **Success Rate:** How often are they able to successfully clip a peg onto an edge?
- **Color Recognition:** Do they seem to understand the concept of matching colors, even if they need help executing it?
- **Engagement:** Which activity was their favorite? What made them laugh? Use this to plan the next fun lesson!