

Lesson Plan: The Little Builder's Fix-It Clinic

Materials Needed:

- **Toy Tools:** A child-safe hammer, screwdriver, and wrench. (Chunky plastic ones are perfect).
- **"Building" Materials:** Cardboard boxes (small and medium), empty paper towel tubes, plastic cups, and building blocks.
- **"Hardware":** Play-doh in various colors, large plastic nuts and bolts (if available), or chenille stems (pipe cleaners) cut into smaller pieces to act as "screws" and "nails."
- **"Blueprint" Station:** A large piece of paper or a small dry-erase board and chunky crayons or markers.
- **Optional:** A small tool belt, a toy hard hat, and a small wagon for hauling materials.

Learning Objectives (What We're Practicing):

- **Fine Motor Skills:** To practice gripping, turning, and pushing motions by using the toy screwdriver and hammering "nails" (pipe cleaners) into play-doh.
- **Problem-Solving & Creativity:** To decide which tool is needed for a job and to build a unique creation using the available materials.
- **Language Development:** To name the three main tools (hammer, screwdriver, wrench) and use action words associated with them (e.g., "hammer the nail," "turn the screw").
- **Object Recognition & Sorting:** To correctly identify and sort the tools.

Lesson Activities

1. Warm-Up: The Tool Time Song (5 minutes)

Goal: Introduce the tools and their sounds in a fun, musical way.

1. Gather the toy hammer, screwdriver, and wrench.
2. Sing this simple song to the tune of "The Wheels on the Bus":
3. *(Show the hammer)*
"The hammer in the shop goes bang, bang, bang,
Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang.
The hammer in the shop goes bang, bang, bang,
All day long!"
4. *(Show the screwdriver and model a twisting motion)*
"The screwdriver in the shop goes turn, turn, turn...
All day long!"
5. *(Show the wrench and model a tightening motion)*
"The wrench in the shop goes grip and turn...
All day long!"
6. Encourage the child to sing along and do the motions with you.

2. Main Activity Part 1: The Fix-It Clinic (15 minutes)

Goal: Practice using each tool for a specific, hands-on task.

1. **Set the Scene:** Announce, "Oh no! All of our things are broken! We need a builder to help us fix them. Welcome to the Fix-It Clinic!"
2. **The Wobbly Table (Hammer Practice):**

- Place a small, upside-down cardboard box on the floor. Give the child a ball of play-doh.
- Say, "This table is wobbly! It needs some nails to make it strong."
- Show them how to push the short pipe cleaner "nails" into the play-doh on the box. Then, let them use the toy hammer to gently tap the "nails" all the way in.

3. **The Loose Lid (Screwdriver Practice):**

- Take another ball of play-doh and press it onto a plastic cup.
- Say, "This lid is loose! We need to screw it on tight."
- If you have large plastic nuts/bolts, have them practice twisting. If not, poke a hole in the play-doh with your finger. Hand them the toy screwdriver and a pipe cleaner "screw" and show them how to "screw" it in by turning the screwdriver.

4. **The Leaky Pipe (Wrench Practice):**

- Hold up a paper towel tube. "This pipe is leaky! We need to tighten the bolts."
- If you have large plastic nuts and bolts, loosely attach one to another toy. Show the child how to use the wrench to grip and turn it tight. If not, simply let them practice gripping the paper towel tube with the wrench and turning it.

3. Main Activity Part 2: Blueprint & Build (15 minutes)

Goal: Encourage creativity, planning, and free-form application of skills.

1. **Draw the Blueprint:** Move to the "Blueprint Station." Say, "Every great builder needs a plan! Let's draw what we want to build." Let the child scribble and draw on the large paper. It doesn't need to look like anything specific. Point to their drawing and say, "What a great plan! It looks like you want to build a tall tower here and a long wall here!"
2. **Free Build:** Present all the materials (boxes, tubes, blocks, play-doh "cement," and tools). Say, "Okay, builder, you have your tools and your blueprint. Let's get to work!"
3. **Facilitate, Don't Direct:** Allow the child to create whatever they want. You can help them by holding boxes steady or asking questions like, "How can we connect these two boxes? Do we need some play-doh cement?" or "Which tool will you use for that?" This is their chance to be creative and lead the play.

4. Cool-Down & Clean-Up: Tool Sorting (5 minutes)

Goal: Reinforce tool identification and introduce responsibility/clean-up.

1. Announce, "Great job, builder! The work day is over. It's time to clean up our tools."
2. Place three containers or just three separate spots on the floor.
3. Ask the child to help you sort the tools. "Can you find all the hammers and put them here?" "Where do the screwdrivers go?" "Let's put the wrenches in this pile."
4. Celebrate their sorting success and admire the creation they built.

Differentiation & Extension Ideas

- **For Extra Support:** If fine motor skills are a challenge, focus more on the "hammering" activity, which uses larger motions. Use bigger, softer balls of play-doh to make pushing "nails" in easier. Provide hand-over-hand guidance for turning the screwdriver.
- **For an Extra Challenge:** Introduce a new tool, like toy pliers for pinching and pulling, or a toy tape measure for measuring the boxes. You can also practice counting by asking, "How many screws did you put in?" or "Can you hammer three nails?"

Assessment (Informal Observation)

During the lesson, just watch and see:

- Can the child pick up the correct tool when you name it?
- Are they attempting the "banging," "turning," or "gripping" motions?
- Are they engaged and having fun with the materials?
- Do they use their imagination during the free-build segment?