

Clay Bead Necklace



Materials:

- Non-toxic clay that can be baked or air-dried.
- Aluminum Foil.
- Beading needle or toothpick.
- Beading wire or string. It must be stiff enough for your tot to poke through the bead hole. (We used 0.7mm Clear Stretch Magic, which was okay but I would look for something prettier next time.)
- Cookie Sheet.
- Baskets or bowls for the baked beads.
- Scissors.
- Smock or bib for your tot.



Instructions:

1. Cover your work area with the foil and your tot with a smock.
2. Show your child how to break off a small piece of clay and roll it between his or her hands to make a bead.



3. When your child has finished creating the bead, use the beading needle/toothpick to create a hole all the way through the bead. Despite what the picture below shows, it is best to poke the needle through the shortest part of the bead so your tot will have an easier time stringing it. Also it helps if you roll the needle around a bit to make sure the hole is large enough. (Obviously older kids could do this part by themselves, but the beading needles were somewhat sharp.)



4. Being careful not to crush the bead and ruin the hole, place the bead on a foil covered baking sheet. If your beads are very different sizes, arrange the tray so all of the small beads are on one side and the largest on the other. (This helps so you can more easily bake the largest ones for more time than the smaller ones.)
5. Repeat until you have enough beads. It is a good idea to wash your child's hands before they switch to a new color of clay.
6. Bake the clay according to the directions on the package. (15 min @ 275 F per 1/4" of thickness for the beads.)



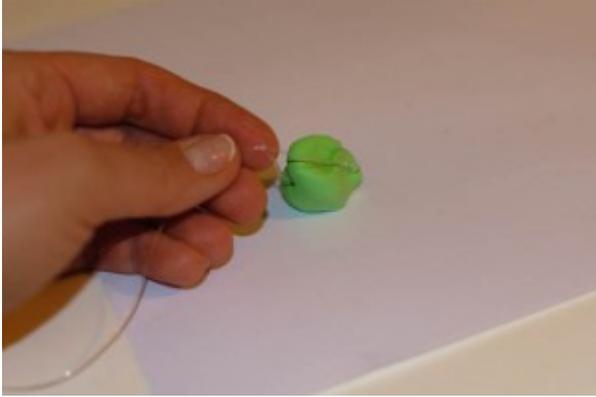
7. If necessary, remove the smallest beads after the first baking and return the larger beads to the oven for 15 more minutes. Repeat as necessary.



8. Let the beads cool and place in baskets.



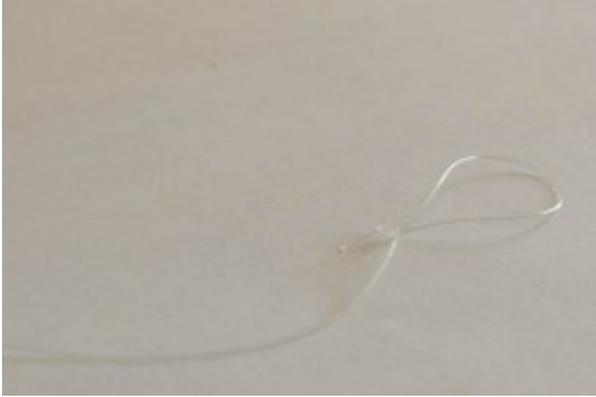
9. Put the string through one bead and tie it in place so the beads don't all run off the end of the necklace every time your tot picks it up.



10. Show your child how to push the string through a bead and pull it all the way to the end.
11. Let them string as many beads as they want.



12. When they are finished stringing the beads, tie a loop at the unfinished end.



13. You can fasten the necklace by slipping the loop over the bead tied to the other end.



14. Happy Mother's Day! Wear or give your necklace away.





Notes from the Trenches:

- If you have white clay, use it before any other colors. Our white beads turned out somewhat grungy. The white really picked up tiny pieces of the other clay colors.
- Your beads can be wildly different sizes. If you want the necklace to look a little better, you could cut the clay into same size chunks before letting your child make beads.

Website source:

<http://totschool.shannons.org/?p=2655>