

**AGE 1-3 - PUZZLES**

**PUZZLES**

**VISUAL DISCRIMINATION AND EYE-HAND CONTROL**

As the child explores the environment, she becomes aware of and interested in the variety of colors and shapes in the indoor and outdoor environment. This is the time to give very simple shape and color puzzles as children love to put things inside containers, such as puzzle pieces in spaces that match.

The use of knobbed puzzles and other toys that call for special finger and hand grips called the *pincer* grip of the thumb and the first two fingers that will prepare the child for writing and other fine muscle activities, while it satisfies her need to think and solve problems.

*It is specifically the opposition between the thumb and index finger that has made it possible to execute the extremely refined movements that have produced the whole of human culture—from architecture to writing, from music to painting, and all the technology that enriches our lives.*

—Dr. Silvana Montanaro

Some toys, such as puzzles, have a specific way to be used, and others, such as dolls and blocks, are more open-ended in their usage. Both are creative. It is a challenge, however, to find toys that have an exact way to be used—such as puzzles.

Children delight in knowing the correct way to use toys with specific procedures, just as they are proud to learn the correct way to use a woodworking tool, or a musical instrument, or the steps in cooking or in solving a myriad of problems in daily life. This is creativity.

Through early experiences with such puzzles, children can develop many useful skills: handling materials, refining movement, completing a cycle of activity, carrying out logical steps in order, solving problems. There is a built

**TWO-PIECE PUZZLES**

**FIRST SHAPE AND SIZE PUZZLES**

These two-piece puzzles are the best first puzzles. The circles are red, the triangular pieces blue, and the squares, yellow. The frames are made of beautifully-finished Baltic Birch plywood with rounded corners. Measurements 9” x 4.25”, the thickness is one-half inch. Made in England.

| CT31 2-Size Circles | $38.00  
| CT32 2-Size Triangles | $38.00  
| CT33 2-Size Squares | $38.00  
| CT34 2-Size Puzzles, Set/3 | $112.00 |

**RED BOARDS**

Choice of Shape Puzzles

In these beautiful British Infant School puzzles the child must choose the space the piece fits in. Each puzzle piece is colored red, so she can focus on the shape. The knobs are the same red and the background frame is a lovely light hardwood. This is also a good first lesson in the names circle, square, rectangle, and triangle. Measurements: 1-piece 4.25” square, 2-piece 4.25” x 9”, 3-piece 4.25” x 13.5”, 4-piece 9” square. Baltic Birch plywood from Russia. The thickness of all puzzles is one-half inch. Set of 4. Made in England.

| CT088 | $180.00  

**"LOOK INSIDE" FARM PUZZLE**

Using a further stage of perception by matching the shape of the “room” to the inside and outside of each, this puzzle is a beautiful challenge. There are two roof pieces and two barn pieces which, when removed, show the tractor, birds, and animals which live in the barn. By the German manufacturer of our "art" puzzles, Solid wood, large red knobs, 8” x 8”.

| CT388 | $22.00  

**LARGE KNOBBED GEOMETRY PUZZLE**

This wooden knobbed puzzle is quite heavy. And that is what makes it so satisfying to the one to three year old who wants to put forth great effort in carrying. Just taking it from the shelf to the table gives the child the feeling that she is doing important work. There are fifteen colored puzzle pieces—triangles, squares and circles, in graduated sizes. The knobs are very important for the development of the hands and fingers. All wood, 15” x 12”.

| CT17 | $48.00  

JOYFUL CHILD, Michael Olaf's Essential Montessori for Birth to Three, 2006-2007
in control of error in puzzles so the child can judge for herself, without the help of another person, if the work has been done correctly. This is high level mental activity. So is the mastery of steps that logically follow each other: grasp the knob, remove the pieces of the puzzle one at a time laying them out on the table. Grasp the knobs again one at a time and place pieces correctly in the frame.

This is so satisfying, mentally and physically, that a child will often be seen repeating the same puzzle over and over, sometimes as many as twenty times, and then breath a sigh of satisfaction when finished. We do not know what occurs in the mind of the child at these times but we do know that it is important and should not be interrupted.

With good logical puzzle toys children learn to bring the use of the body under the control of the will, to concentrate, to make a plan, to follow a train of thought, and to repeat and perfect. This is the foundation of creativity.

With open-ended toys children learn to apply these same skills and to express and process their unique mental information. They process and relive experiences, for example while playing with dolls or animal models. The quality and variety of open-ended, imaginative play depends on the quality and variety of experiences in the world of reality.

In choosing a puzzle there are several elements to keep in mind. Look not only for durability, safety, quality and beauty, but also for the amount of time the play (important work) will engage a child. Knobbed puzzles offer more steps to master, insert puzzles beginning with simple shapes are the best with which to begin. Two-piece jigsaw puzzles introduce a new challenge and lead the child on to more and more difficult and satisfying puzzles as he grows.

The most important thing to consider is that the child enjoys the work, for it is through enjoyable work that she will repeat, focus, and grow.

FIVE 2-PIECE GEOMETRY JIGSAW PUZZLES

Learning to put together pieces of a jigsaw puzzle provide an entirely different kind of visual discrimination and eye-hand control. Finally a perfect beginning has been invented. Five different puzzles come in this set. The pieces of each 2-piece puzzle are the same color and exactly symmetrical, introducing also the idea of symmetry. The geometric forms are triangle, circle, ellipse, hexagon, and square. To give some idea of the sizes of these sturdy puzzles, the ellipse is 5.5” long.

We recommend putting them out, one at a time at first, then two at a time, in the tray pictured below. As you add more puzzles the child will be able to sort them by color and assemble the pieces by sight. The set of five puzzles comes in a cloth drawstring bag. NOTE: for the tray in this illustration, perfect for one set of these puzzles, see 8.5” x 5” Michael Olaf Basic Tray, Small on page 65.

CT800  $29.00
(*) CT805 Puzzles & Tray  $47.00

PART-WHOLE PERCEPTION PUZZLE

This puzzle can be used in two ways. In the beginning you can use 1, 2, 3, of the pairs on a tray.

Gradually the child will learn to put all of them together outside the frame and then all 9 puzzles inside the frame, exploring circle, square, and triangle. Each of the pieces of the two-part puzzles is a different color so the child has to concentrate on the shapes with no clue from color to match up the pieces. It is interesting, and a pre-geometry lesson, to see that there are several different ways to make each of the three shapes. The dimensions of the puzzle are 12” x 12.”

CT8010  $42.00

EUROPEAN KNOBBED ART PUZZLES

These lovely traditional puzzles from Germany are often found in art museums. They are painted in delicate colors, with large red knobs. The paint, as in all of our puzzles on these pages (unlike many puzzles available today) is child safe and they have been tested for many years in Europe. Each puzzle contains five pieces on a light wood 8” x 8” background.

CT200  Construction  $22.00
CT214  Zoo Animals  $22.00

(*) = new items