

Sensory Play Ideas

Sensory play is important for children. It strengthens all areas a development, not to mention builds connections in their brains. Here is a list of sensory play ideas you can try at home with, mostly, easy to find items and/or ingredients. Supervision will be required with some of these activities and there are some that have small parts. Take a deep breath and put down a sheet. It's about to get messy!

- Water in a sink, pool, wash tub or bathtub
 - Add soap and wash babies, toy cars, plastic animals, dishes, siblings...
 - Wear your swimsuit in the bath tub
 - Add plastic animals and have a pond, ocean, or aquarium
 - Play sink or float, add boats, can you sink them?
 - Add measuring cups discover how two pours of one size fills another
 - Turkey baster, ladle
 - Add empty containers with different types of tops, to squirt, pump, or pour
- Tub or bin fillers
 - Rice, dried beans, dried corn, dried or cooked pasta, oatmeal (every family will have different ideas about whether or not it is appropriate to play with food, these ideas are not meant to offend)
 - Sand, kinetic sand, water beads, pom-poms, bird seed
 - Dirt, use as a sensory bin filler or find a patch in your yard, make homes for animals, find worms and insects, make mud
 - Shredded paper
 - Moon sand
 - 1 part flour to 1/8 part baby oil (i.e. 2 cups flour to ¼ cup oil)
 - Ice, put in water with polar plastic animals for the artic, freeze small toy in the ice and melt with warm water, freeze objects in the ice and “rescue” objects with a hammer
 - Oobleck
 - 2 cups cornstarch 1 cup water, food coloring optional (Do NOT pour down drain)
 - Cloud Dough
 - 2 parts corn starch to 1 part hair conditioner, add conditioner until a soft dough forms
 - To your sensory bin you can add: measuring cups and spoons, egg cartons, muffin tins, and ice cube tray (to encourage sorting) cups, bowls, animal figurines, funnels, tweezers and tongs, scissors, finger hole punches, medicine droppers
- Yard work and gardening: raking, washing the car (encourage back and forth to help your preschooler practice crossing the mid-line, and important development step), planting seeds, picking flowers and vegetables
- Playdough (see our website for a recipe)

- Shaving cream
- Finger paint
 - <https://www.growingajeweledrose.com/2013/04/play-recipe-for-paint.html>
 - <https://simplytodaylife.com/homemade-finger-paint/>
- Face paint: equal parts lotion and cornstarch, use finger paints to color face paint. You can use a small amount of food coloring but it may stain the skin.
- Random kitchen cooking, set up a large bowl, a spoon for stirring, and provide several “ingredients”, oatmeal, water, small dry pasta, yogurt, flour, whatever you have one hand, for mixing
- Egg shell smash, if you make a larger batch of scrambled eggs save the shells, the next day let your preschooler smash them with a hammer. Make sure to wash hands afterwards.
- Pounding golf tees into Styrofoam
- Bubbles
- Pudding, the original edible finger paint
- Slime
 - <https://hip2save.com/2016/07/23/homemade-slime-recipe-just-2-ingredients/>
 - <https://littlebinsforlittlehands.com/liquid-starch-slime-easy-sensory-play-recipe/>
- Pots and pans band
- Flashlight shadows
- Sensory bags, mix two paint colors together, or fill with sprinkles and tape to table top for drawing, hair gel with add ins like plastic animals, foam letters or shapes, glitter
- Marshmallow shooters
 - <http://twoyellowbirdsdecor.blogspot.com/2013/06/marshmallow-shooters.html?m=1>
- Zip ties, buy a larger size zip tie and cut the end off of a couple of them, leaving a small amount to hold onto. Show children how to run the other end through to make the zipping sound.

