



Sensory Play



Guide for Home

The Benefits of Sensory Play

Young people learn and develop through play, especially unstructured exploratory play. Sensory play focuses on exploring and experimenting with different types of materials therefore there is not always any requirement for an end product. This enables young people to make their own discoveries using their senses, curiosity and knowledge. This allows any young person to participate whatever their development level and benefit from it. Sensory experiences are significant for stimulating brain development, encouraging new language skills, regulating emotions and encouraging creative fun!

Top Tip 1: Preparation!

These activities can result in varying degrees of mess! Therefore, preparation is key:

- Only use substances that you know your child is not allergic to,
- Use a space that can be easily cleaned,
- Cover surfaces,
- Ensure your child is in suitable clothing for getting messy,
- Have a cloth, wipes, towels, etc ready for when the activity is complete and
- Some materials are better contained on a large tray. This may also help with access.

Top Tip 2: Be Creative!

To ensure that the play is sensory then as many senses as possible need to be stimulated. On the following pages are many recipes for many different sensory materials. Once familiar (and indeed successful), these recipes can often be adapted to involved different textures, smells, tastes and even sounds (depending on the materials added); edible versions can be made. However, as always, be aware of the first point in Top Tip 1 - Only use substances that you know your child is not allergic to.

[Within this guide are lots of different ideas/recipes to try but this list is not final. There are many, many ideas on the internet so have a look and try things!](#)

Sensory materials

Making dry or cooked materials interesting by colouring them.

Dyed Oats



You will need:

- 6 cups of large flake whole grain oats (1 cup for each color)
- Water
- food colouring
- Paper towel
- Large Bowl

HOW TO DYE OATS FOR SENSORY PLAY

1. In a bowl mix approximately 1.5 tablespoons of water with a few drops of food colouring. You want just enough liquid to coat the oats. You do not want them to be drenched.

2. Add the rolled oats.

3. When evenly coated pour the mixture onto paper towel and leave in a warm room to dry. Drying time is only about an hour.

Rainbow Dyed Chickpeas



You will need:

- Dried chickpeas
- Colouring liquid - Liquid watercolours or food colouring,
- Large bowl or zipper seal plastic bags

1. Put 1.5 cups of chickpeas and about 5-8 squirts of colouring liquid in a plastic bag.
2. Shake and mix the contents until the chickpeas are well coated. You may need to add more colouring liquid to get complete coverage.
3. Within minutes, the chickpeas were dry to the touch.

How to Dye Pasta

Materials Needed for Dyeing Pasta

- Dried pasta
- Rubbing alcohol
- Food colouring
- Huge size plastic baggies
- Newspaper
- Tray or cookie sheet

Directions for Dyeing Pasta

1. Start by placing your dried pasta into a large plastic bag.

2. Add some rubbing alcohol and food colouring to the bag of pasta. (The amount depends on how much pasta you are dying, but you really can't go wrong. For one whole package of rigatoni, use about 1/4 cup alcohol and 4-5 big squirts of food colouring.)

3. Mash the bag around so all the pasta gets covered with the rubbing alcohol and food colouring.

4. Let the bags sit for about 10-15 minutes. Be sure to move them around a few times to get even coverage.

5. Spread some newspaper out. Tip the pasta out of the baggie and onto the newspaper. Spread it out as best you can and wait for it to dry.

Cloud Dough



Ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup Vegetable oil
- 5-10 drops Oil based food colouring
- Zip-Lock bags

Instructions

1. Premix colouring in the oil before adding it to the flour.
2. Mix your ingredients in a zip-lock bag. Knead and shake around until mixed as much as possible.

3. Before you play you will have to get your hands into the mix to pinch the flour to distribute the remaining oils and colouring. At this point, it should be mixed well enough that your hands will not stain.
4. Empty out into a tub for playing.

Rainbow Spaghetti Sensory Play



You will need

- a few packs of spaghetti
- Food colouring
- Water
- Pan

How to make it

1. Mix the food colouring with the water and bring to the boil.
2. Add the pasta and cook until soft (if the pasta doesn't change colour enough then you will need to add more food colour to the boiling water).
3. Drain the pasta
4. Place the pasta in large plastic bags or boxes and allow to cool.
5. Store in the fridge.

Bottles

Hurricane in a Jar



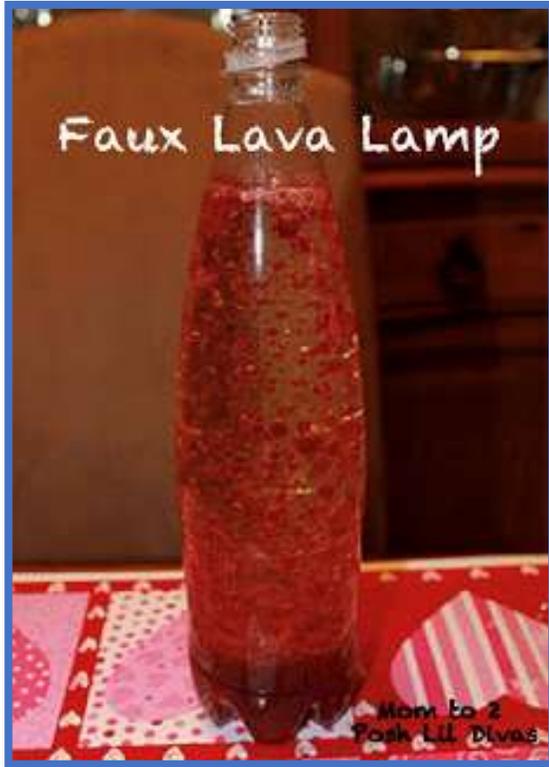
You will need:

- A glass jar with a lid
- Some Soap - that contains Glycol Stearate (This is the stuff that makes it pearly (not Glycol Distearate), check the ingredients)
- Water
- Food colouring is optional (depends on the soap whether you need it)

How to make a Hurricane!

1. Fill the jar up to approximately 1/4 to 1/3 full of soap.
2. Add water to fill up the rest of the space. When the water gets to the top, keep it running until all the bubbles overflow and are gone.
3. If you want to add colour, drop maybe 1 or 2 drops of food colouring into your jar.
4. Screw the cap on tightly and SHAKE!

Faux Lava Lamp



What You Need:

- clear bottle(s)
- water
- oil
- food colour
- alka seltzer (or silimar effervescent tablet)
- funnel

What To Do:

1. Pour oil into your bottle - filling it about $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way
2. Pour water into your bottle - a little less than $\frac{1}{3}$ to leave some room at the top
3. Add food colour of choice
4. Cut 2 Alka Seltzer (or similar) tablet into 8 pieces (you can use a larger piece if you have a big bottle)
5. Add 1 piece of the tablet at a time & observe the reaction.

Sensory Bags

These can be useful in allowing young people to explore where they may put inappropriate materials in their mouths.

All you need is plastic bags, hair gel and food colouring (and anything else you want to add)



Water beads



These beads are not made and as such will need to be bought but they are colourful and give a very tactile experience.

<https://www.amazon.com/Kids-Water-Beads-Sensory-Toys/dp/B01FQTFR34>

Fake snow



- 4 cups of frozen baking Soda or Corn flour

- 2-4 cups of shaving Cream

Method

- Add the desired amount of ***frozen baking soda/corn flour*** to a sensory bin or container. We used two large boxes to give us **4 cups of baking soda**.
- Slowly begin to mix shaving cream into the baking soda/corn flour, slowly adding more shaving cream and mixing until the desired consistency is reached.

Slimes/Gloop



There are a load of recipes for slime and gloop so we are not going to put loads on here.

The usual ingredients are:

1. 1/2 c. clear glue (or white glue, either bottle of glue will work)
2. 1/2 c. warm water
3. Contact lens cleaning solution – 4 tbsp. or so, amount depends on the consistency you want.
4. Beads, foam and sequins – whatever you want to put in.

Oobleck



This is just a mixture of cornflour and water but just enough water to make the mixture move around and feel slimy. Too much water and the mixture will be too loose and runny.

You can add whatever you want to it - fruit, veg, juice (this will affect the mixture, so you'll need less water).

Paints

Paints can be bought but they can also be made!

The recipes below are from an American website so some of the ingredients have different names. We have listed these to help you.

- Cornstarch – Cornflour
- Kosher Salt – cooking salt can be used
- School Glue – PVA Glue
- Cornstarch Syrup – Golden Syrup can be used
- Liquid Dish Soap – Washing up Liquid
- Baking Soda – Bi-Carbonate of Soda
- Kool Aid (a powdered drink mix) – can be replaced with food colouring

HOMEMADE PAINT

Recipes

Doodle paint

1/2 cup flour
1/4 cup kosher salt
3/4 cup water
food coloring

Finger paint

1/2 cup cornstarch
2 3/4 cup cold water
2 1/2 tsp of unflavoured gelatine
in 1/4 cup cold water
food coloring

Puffy sand paint

play sand
dilute with shaving cream
food coloring

Sparkle paint

1 tbsp bubble bath
5 drops food coloring
1 tsp glitter

Puffy paint

1/4 cup school glue
3/4 cup shaving cream
1 cup flour
food coloring

Flour paint

1 tbsp flour
2 tbsp water
gel food coloring
(or food coloring)

Glossy skittle paint

skittles
cornstarch syrup

Window paint

tempera paint
dilute with liquid dish soap

Sidewalk chalk paint

2/3 cup cornstarch
2/3 cup baking soda
food coloring
water

Mud paint

scoop of mud
1-2 tbsp powdered tempura
(or liquid watercolor or food coloring)
water
1 tbsp dishwashing liquid soap

Chalkboard paint

2 tbsp plaster of paris
1 tbsp water
3 tbsp acrylic paint

Foam paint

1/2 cup shaving cream
1/2 cup school glue
food coloring

Bath paint

1/2 cup bubble bath
1/2 cup cornstarch
2 tbsp water
food coloring

Kool-aid paint

1 kool-aid sachet
1 tbsp water
2 tsp water

Watercolor paint

1 cup baking soda
1 cup cornstarch
2 tbsp corn syrup
3/4 cup vinegar
food coloring

Face paint

1 tbsp cornstarch
1 tbsp face lotion
vegetable oil to smoothen the paste
drops of washable paint
(or food coloring or homemade dye)

Frozen



You can freeze most sensory things - slime, oobleck, paint. This adds a different dimension to the materials.

Fizzing



By adding Bi-Carbonate of Soda to recipes and then white vinegar to the liquid you can create fizzing paint, oobleck, potions, doughs, chalk, fruit, etc. These can also be frozen!

Play doughs



Again, there are lots of recipes for Play dough on the internet. The non-cook recipes are easiest.

You will need:

1 1/2 cups of plain flour
1/2 cup of salt
2 tablespoons of cream of tartar
2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
1 cup of boiling water
Food Colouring

How to make it

1. Combine the flour, salt, cream of tartar and vegetable oil in a bowl.
2. Add the food colouring to the boiling water and then pour this into the bowl with the other ingredients bit by bit.
3. Mix all the ingredients together until it starts to come together as a dough.
4. When the dough has cooled slightly take it out of the bowl and kneed it really well. This is the most important part!

To make a rainbow spectrum of no-cook play dough you can follow these steps above and just change the food colouring each time. There are so many other ways to customise play dough, even adding cocoa powder, spices or herbs.

Bubbles

Another thing where there are lots of recipes, some better than others.



Basically, mix soap and water. Bubbles can be made using any type of liquid soap you have around the house. Some soaps make bubbles that last longer than others, so experiment with different types until you find one you like. Simply mix one-part liquid soap and 4 parts water in a jar, cup or bowl. Try these different types of soaps:

- Liquid dish soap. This makes a great bubble base, and it's something you probably already have on hand.
- Body wash or shampoo. These may not be quite as sudsy as liquid dish soap, but they should still work fine for making bubbles.
- All-natural laundry detergent. Stay away from commercially produced detergent, which may not be safe for use on sensitive skin. Chemical-free laundry detergent can be found at health food stores.

Enhance your bubble solution. There are a few tricks you can use to make your bubbles stronger and more interesting than typical bubbles. Experiment with these ingredients until you've created a solution that's best for you:

- Add a little sugar, syrup, or starch to the mixture. This causes the bubbles to be a little thicker, which results in longer-lasting bubbles.
- Add some food colouring. You can separate the solution into a few different containers and make different coloured bubbles.

**Above all else –
have FUN!**