

Sensory play, learning links and ideas

Instagram accounts to follow for play and sensory ideas

@play.hooray

@fiveminutemum

@beckys_treasure_baskets

@the_play_at_home_mummas

@tufflove_and_sensoryplay

@sen_teacher_

@sensoryplay.uk

@earlyyearsoutdoor

@sensoryideas

Sensory/messy play ideas

- <https://www.learning4kids.net/list-of-sensory-play-ideas/>
- <https://lemonlimeadventures.com/12-sensory-play-ideas-to-encourage-hands-on-learning/>
- **Cloud Dough**
 - Pour 1 Cup Baby Rice into a container
 - Add 3 Tablespoons of Melted Coconut Oil to the rice cereal.
 - Mix and let the mixture cool.
- **Cornflour gloop**
 - Cornflour
 - Water
 - Colouring (if desired)
- **Paint with different objects** – sticks, plants, feathers, fruit/veg printing, hands and feet etc
- **Water play**
- **Sock bubble snakes**

Plastic bottle - wide end cut off, Sock, Washing up liquid and water

Put sock over end of bottle, dip into washing up liquid/water solution, blow through drinking end.

- **Crazy soap**
- **Water spray bottles**
- **Coloured rice/spaghetti**

- **Ice play – freeze (safe or edible) objects in ice** – explore them, try and melt them, use other tools to try and break the ice to get to objects
- **Collect leaves, flowers, petals etc and make potions and perfumes**
- **Mud kitchens**
- **Have a bath purely for playing** – take different toys, bath bombs, crazy soap etc, bath crayons

Play ideas

- **Containers, sieves, pots and pans** – play with rice, water, flour
- **Digger land** – set up vehicles with cereal, rice, soil, corks etc
- **Nature hunt outside** – make a list of objects to find
- **Plant seeds/vegetables etc**
- **Dig for worms and other creatures**
- **Bath dolls**
- **Muddy puddles** – tray with hot choc powder and water to make mud, put animals or anything that your child is interested in in muddy tray. Have a second tray with clean soapy water in and wash the animals/objects after they have got muddy.
- **Duplo/lego/blocks**
- **Puzzles and jigsaws**

Story ideas

- **You tube** has lots of stories recorded
- **You can also do your own sensory story**

Choose a book and get together some simple resources to support story in a sensory way:
e.g.

Hair dryer on different temp settings for wind, hot sun

Water spray and umbrellas for rain

Spices for smells

Instruments for different noises/actions

Different fabrics and textures to feel

Soft toys to represent characters in the story

Food items for taste

Ice and heat packs for cold/warmth

Foil blankets

Mark making and fine motor

- Threading cheerios onto spaghetti
- Hammer golf tees into potatoes

- Poke straws into holes in a shoe box
- Posting activities – make hole in box and post items in
- Sticks etc into playdough
- Chalks on ground outside
- Paint sticks on windows (they do wash off)
- Painting with water and paintbrushes outside
- Threading beads onto pipe cleaners
- Pasta onto string
- Pipe cleaners into colander holes
- Draw/paint/mark make onto and inside cardboard box
- Colour matching activities - use coloured bowls and plates, find objects from around the home or just building blocks etc, can they sort into colours
- Water, washing up liquid and whisks
- Bath bombs
- Cutting and sticking using old magazines, make collages, use Argos catalogue to make a collage of favourite things
- Play with clothes pegs – hang out dolls clothes, socks etc on a washing line (tie piece of string between two chairs)

Sensory diet activities

- Trampolining.
- Cycling or using a scooter.
- Swings (forward and back, side to side, rotary)
- Rough and tumble play.
- Deep pressure squishing or sandwiching with pillows or balls
- Spinners and roundabouts

Jumping

- on bed
- sofa
- trampoline

Climbing

- jungle gyms
- monkey bars
- ropes
- slides

- through a tunnel

Swinging

- outdoor swings
- indoor swings

Riding

- scooter board
- bikes
- scooters
- any of the above over bumps or down hills
- seesaw

Pushing/Pulling Heavy Objects (Heavy Work Activities)

- carrying shopping
- pushing empty wheelie bins inside
- raking leaves
- pulling weeds
- shovelling mud/soil
- vacuuming
- pushing shopping trolley
- carrying a laundry basket
- a rope tied to a door knob or heavy object

Chewing

- crunchy foods
- salty or spicy foods
- chewy jewelry
- chewable safe toys
- teethers and chewable toys

Vibration (is alerting versus calming when used in short bursts)

- handheld massagers
- vibrating cushions/pillows

Playing active games

- running
- obstacle courses
- tug of war
- row, row, row your boat with a partner
- Swimming
- Crashing and jumping into pillows (put all of your pillows or soft toys in a pile on the floor)

Playing with textures (Stimulates the tactile sense)

- shaving cream
- finger Paint
- mud
- wet sand
- water
- ice

Blowing

- various whistles and noise makers
- bubbles
- pinwheels

Movement

- Rolling on a large ball on back or belly
- Sitting on a large ball - during meals, for homework/in school
- Scratching their back vigorously for a few minutes

Spinning (a very intense sensory experience, best for kids to spin themselves even if they love spinning. Be very cautious of spinning a child, and only do so a few times in both directions. This is important because it will help balance out their system.)

- swing
- swivel chair
- while standing
- sit and spin

Sensory Activities that are Calming

- Wearing Tight Clothing
- Body socks or stretchy bands for short intervals during play
- Compression clothing worn throughout the day
- Wearing compression or weighted vests for 10-20 minutes during difficult times of the day (i.e. transitions)
- Quiet time in sensory tent

Playing in sensory bin (tons of ideas, the sky is the limit)

- rice
- beans
- birdseed
- sand
- cloud dough
- spaghetti/ noodles

Touch

- Massage
- Kneading playdough or therapy putty

Handling fidget toys (a wide variety of options)

- koosh balls
- stress balls

Squishing and squeezing

- hugs
- squeezing into tight spots or behind furniture
- wrapping up tightly in blanket
- sleeping in stretchy sheets that are tucked in on sides
- laying under a large yoga ball
- Sit or stand on a wobble cushion or wobble seat (great for meals, homework, and crafts)

Using essential oils (different types of oils are used to calm or be alert)

- in room diffusers

- in bath

Audio

- Listening to rhythmic or soft music
- Wearing noise cancelling headphones

Watching slow moving or soothing images

- Fish tank
- Lava lamp
- Slow changing lights

Sucking/drinking

- Drinking something warm
- Sucking thick milkshake through a straw
- Drinking something cold

Slow rocking

- Rocking chair
- Hammock

Calming

- Using heavy or weighed blankets or lap pads (check out the whole guide for weighted blankets here and how and when to use weighted lap pads.)
- Vibration (is calming rather than alerting when used for longer periods of time)
- Handheld massagers
- Vibrating cushions/pillows
- Teethers and chewable toys

Play together, go out for walks, let them play with siblings and by themselves, allow down time, Ipad, Tv, time in the garden etc

We hope the above list helps give you some ideas of things you could do with your child at home, you know your child best so know which activities they will and won't be able to access, you will also have some good ideas of your own, this list is by no means exhaustive but we hope it is useful.