

12 sensory experience activities

Exposing children to sensory play helps them develop and refine the use of their senses which include touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste.

Sensory activities facilitate exploration and naturally encourage children to use scientific processes while they play, create, investigate and explore. Spending time stimulating their senses supports all areas of children's learning and development.



Eye Spy Bottles

- Place some rice in a snap lock bag and add a few drops of food colouring and vinegar
- Squish the rice around the bag until it is all coloured and pour it into a transparent bottle with a lid
- Add some little figurines, trinkets and buttons (material stores and some craft stores sell buttons that feature animals, foods and a variety of themes)
- Babies can shake and roll the bottle around discovering new and exciting objects each time they move the bottle.

Frozen Ice Paints

- Pour poster paint into an ice cube tray, put it in the freezer for about 20 minutes and let it begin to harden
- Add lollipop sticks (so they stay firmly upright) and let the paint freeze overnight
- For babies you can use water and food colouring and follow the same process.

Sensory Obstacle Course

- Suspend coloured scarves or ribbons at one end of a tunnel / large open box for babies to crawl, or walk through
- Place a mirror and torch at different points in the tunnel and include different textured materials including cushions to interact with
- Boxes could also be added to an obstacle course to crawl in and out of.

Rain Maker

- Fill re-cycled cardboard tubes or small plastic bottles with rice or lentils
- Ensure a lid is securely sealed (with tape)
- Allow babies to explore the sound.

Edible Paint Recipe

- Take 250g of cornflour and mix with 2.5 cups of cold water and stir until dissolved
- Pour in a saucepan and heat gently (stirring all the time), after a few minutes the paint will thicken
- Add a few drops of food colouring and mix well (or split the recipe and create a few different colours)
- Add a drop of cold water if the paint is too thick
- Use once the paint has cooled and store in an air tight container or sealed jar.

A Sensory Peek-A-Boo Board

- Secure photos onto a piece of cardboard (a shoe box lid is perfect for this)
- Consider using photos of babies' family members, animals or pictures to represent their favourite songs e.g. a spider for Incy Wincey Spider
- Put clear tape over the photos to protect them
- Cover each photo with a piece of textured fabric and attach ribbons to each as a 'handle'.

Outdoor Sensory Experiences

- Talk with children about the sounds you hear, movements you see, fragrances you can smell
- Touch natural objects that are smooth, rough, bumpy
- Observe babies interests in experiencing different textures under their feet as they walk on grass, or put their feet in sand.

Icy Shaving Foam

- Place shaving foam in a refrigerator for a few hours or store in the fridge overnight. Fill tins / bowls with the chilled shaving foam
- Stir colouring into the paint
- Add a touch of paint to the foam and gently swirl to make a marble effect. Add glitter if you wish to make the paint sparkle
- You can add a few drops of each colour into the foam and let the children mix them as they paint / play with the foam.

Discovery Baskets

- Put together a themed collection of objects based on current interests / sounds / colours / textures
- You can also create themed discovery boxes / baskets for exploration.

Cloudy Playdough

- Combine two cups of cornflour
- And one cup of hair conditioner.

Lavender Dyed Rice

- Place uncooked rice into a bag (double bag as a precaution for tears and spills)
- Add food colouring (blue and pink to make lavender colour) to the rice and stir to evenly distribute
- Lay the rice out overnight to dry on trays ensuring the layer of rice is not too thick or it will not dry
- Before sharing with the babies add some lavender flower heads.

Painting

- Add paint to zip lock bags
- Let babies swirl, squish and press the paint around in the bag.
- Make it a true sensory experience (and full body one too) and let babies apply paint to a canvas.

Exploring Senses

- Provide a range of items found in and around a home for babies to explore e.g. wooden spoons, measuring spoons, an orange, loafer sponge etc.
- Put the items into discovery bags (cloth bags or shoe boxes) and share these with parents
- Add a small laminated card outlining the learning potential to ensure parents can extend on these activities in the home
- They could add photos to the bag of other items their babies have enjoyed exploring.