

**Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.**

## Activity: squeeze and squirt

The act of squeezing and squirting helps to strengthen children's hand muscles and improves coordination and control. This activity provides valuable opportunities for children to practise gripping, squeezing and releasing objects, which are essential skills for future tasks such as writing.

### Learning aims

- To encourage gross and fine motor skills in different ways
- Introduce and use numbers and mathematical vocabulary such as big/little/medium, empty/full, high/low, heavy/light
- Sensory exploration of different textures, colours, and sensations.



### Resources

- A large container and water
- A variety of different-sized sponges, squirty toys and squirty bottles
- Draw a selection of 'targets' in your outdoor area with chalk in a variety of sizes and at different heights or use targets in your space such as a tree.

### Activity outline

- Set up your outdoor area with targets hung onto a wall/fence at different levels. Have the container of water and sponges and bottles a couple of paces away
- Children can choose a resource to use - either a sponge that they can squeeze out then throw, or the bottles/toys to squeeze and fill with water then squeeze again to hit the target
- Encourage children to hit the big, small high, and low targets using a big, small sponge or bottle
- Add mathematical language to the activity by encouraging children to target the big/small targets, count "1, 2, 3, go" as they throw and count how many targets they can hit

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- Encourage problem solving and decision making by asking them open-ended questions such as, what would happen if they squeezed the bottle hard/gently, what happens when the sponges are full of water or how they can make the water go further/not as far
- You could add numbers to the targets to provide opportunities for number recognition
- Promote social interaction by encouraging children to share and take turns.

### **Extension ideas:**

- Hide small figures under messy paint or soil and provide water droppers for the children to squeeze and reveal the figures
- Fill squeezey bottles with paint and squeeze them onto paper/cardboard to make an abstract picture - this could be large scale on a large piece of fabric or cardboard box
- Provide long-handled brushes so the children can brush away the puddles.

### **NDNA products to support you with this activity:**

- Water play [top tips and activities](#)
- Online course - [Motor skills](#).