

Provide plenty of opportunity to explore sensory tactile experiences

- Tactile boxes - Try a deep container with dry split peas, broth mix/lentils or pasta. Encourage the child to run their fingers through the pulses, you could hide small toys and encourage the child to find them. Trial carefully as this can get messy.
- Feely Bags – Contents could include: different textures of material, objects, small vibrating toys. Hide a number of everyday objects in a bag (comb, toy car, spoon etc – anything really). Place the child's hands inside the bag, feel each item and tell you what he/she thinks it is.
- Stretch toys, these are dolls that are made of strong rubber that you can pull the arms and legs into different shapes. This gives extra pull resistance.

- Provide a toy that the child can fidget safely with.

Water and Sand Play

Play in sand

Sand trays or a trip to the beach can be great fun.

Water Play

- Water & Sponge Race – play a game whereby emptying one container of water into another container by using a sponge. Encourage them to squeeze all of the water out of the sponge on each emptying (could get messy, probably one for outside or in the bathroom!).
- Make a hole in the top of a plastic bottle. Squeeze the bottle to spray water. You can play target practice!
- Use a safe, cleaned out spray bottle with water or water pistols.
- Water balloons. Can be good in a paddling pool (if controlled).
- Time at the beach.
- Play with hoses, paddling pool.
- Water tray, bath toys.

Always think safety first!!

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Why Sensory Play?

Sensory play is very important for young children and is an essential foundation to a child's development. From birth children learn about the world through all their senses i.e. touching, tasting, smelling, seeing, hearing, body awareness and balance.

Sensory play contributes to brain development. It stimulates the senses sending signals to children's brains that help to develop their pathways in the brain. This is important for all types of learning including helping to develop a child's gross and fine motor skills. It can also help with concentration.

Sensory experiences can be very calming for many children and can help them work through troubling emotions, such as anxiety or frustration. For example, working with materials that require pressure and manipulation, such as play dough, can help children release tension.

Likewise, sensory experiences can lead to children's expression of positive feelings.

Craft Activities

- paper/material collages, gluing
- painting (brush and finger)
- play dough recipes
- hand and foot prints
- papier-mâché
- clay
- shaving foam (finger paint can be used in it)
- gloop (corn flour/water)
- marbling
- spaghetti play (great for placing objects in)
- jelly play as above (mix the colours) what can the child find with eyes open or closed. Make sure the child does not put inedible items in their mouth.

Kitchen Activities

Cooking/Baking - cooking or baking activities are great activities and fun. Give the child plenty of opportunity to work with the ingredients for example kneading.

Gardening

Encourage the child to work with the soil maybe planting, digging or weeding.

The child could help water the garden.

Calming Activities

For children that become easily excited, upset and/or over active, sensory activities can sometimes help to calm them.

Try any heavy work or play activity which provides resistance such as digging, hoovering, carrying shopping bags, moving furniture and putting the bins out.

Other ideas:-

- Encourage them to do press-ups/sit ups on the floor or against the wall.
- Give themselves a bear hug, as tight as they can.
- Play push and pull games e.g. tug of war, playfully trying to push another person over a line.
- Activities which require putting weight on arms, such as wheelbarrow or animal walks.
- Any adventure play or climbing frames.

These types of activities require to be done regularly to try and help a child who has sensory processing difficulties stay calm.