

Sensory Play at home

Why is sensory/messy play important?

Messy play is important for young children, giving them endless ways to develop and learn. All types of play are essential for children's development and early learning. Play helps children to develop and improve their gross and fine motor skills, co-ordination and concentration. Also how to work cooperatively and collaboratively, use all their senses to discover and explore their environment, and develop their imagination, creative thinking and ability to problem solve and experiment with solutions.

What is it?

Sensory play is any activity that stimulates children's senses: touch, smell, taste, sight, hearing, vestibular and proprioception (the sense of space). Stimulating the senses helps children develop thinking, language, social-emotional, and physical skills.

How to do it?

Below is a list of sensory play activities that you could do with your children in order to help with their sensory stimulation and feedback.

All of these activities can be done either in a plastic tray or a big tuff tray if you have access to one at home.

A list of the following items can be placed in a tray for pupils to explore and play alongside you, with ideas of what you could do with the sensory items.

- **Rice** – sprinkling, pouring in and out of containers
- **Pasta/Spaghetti** – exploring different colours/textures
- **Water and water with bubbles** – 'ready, steady, go' games and pouring
- **Angel delight** – mixing it up, exploring the taste
- **Sand** – sprinkling, making sand castles
- **Oats** – pouring in and out of plastic containers
- **Flour** – sifting, watching the flour fall
- **Jelly** – wobble wobble falling off a plate and into the tray
- **Cereals** – including cornflakes & rice crispies – crunching, rolling toy cars over it
- **Foam (shaving or crazy foam)** – squishing in your hands, mark-making with fingers
- **Feathers** – picking apart, watching them float down



This is not an exhaustive list and there are lots of ideas on Facebook or Google under the heading 'tuff tray ideas' or 'messy play ideas' or 'sensory play'.