

Sensory Play

IMPORTANT Parent or Carer –
Check that you are happy with any weblinks or use of the internet.

Activity 1 – Making sensory toys

Make a sensory bottle

What to do

- Decide whether you are going to have a dry or wet sensory bottle: dry bottles can have a greater range of fillings and can be shaken and tipped to make sounds; wet bottles are generally more appealing to look at and the liquid filling allows more free and mesmerising movement.
- Fill the bottle together with dry ingredients, discussing and choosing what to put in.
- Fill with liquid (if creating a wet bottle), premixing liquid in a jug and then pouring into the bottle.
- Check that you are happy with the finished result by screwing on the lid and tipping. Then, glue the lid in place using a glue gun or super glue away from your child.

What you need

A clean, clear plastic bottle with a lid.

Dry ingredients:

Glitter, beads, sequins, small plastic toys, small bells, small pasta shapes, dried lentils, rice, googly eyes, confetti, buttons etc.

Wet ingredients:

Water, food colouring, baby/cooking oil, glycerine, glitter glue, liquid soap
(You can use just water, or combine with colouring, glue, oil, and/or soap for different effects.)



Extension

Make a sensory bottle on a theme, e.g. *a noisy bottle, a sparkly bottle, a spring colour bottle, natural objects*, etc.

Try different combinations of liquids to achieve faster and slower flow.

Add colour mixing to the play, predicting and exploring adding different colours to your water before adding to the bottle.

Questions to ask

Why do we need a clear/transparent bottle?
What will happen if we shake a bottle filled with pasta shapes?

What will happen if we put food colouring in the water? What will yellow and blue make?
Will the objects move differently in water and in oil? What if we mix the oil and water?
How does the bottle make you feel?

Activity 2 – Making sensory toys

Make a musical instrument

What to do

- Look at your collected materials together and explore the different sounds you can make by hitting, scraping, shaking and plucking (wind instruments are much harder than they look!).
- Explore combining materials to make new sounds (*rice in a crisp tube to make a shaker, elastic bands stretched over a box can be plucked, paper, cellophane or a balloon pulled over a jar to make a drum, etc.*)
- You can enjoy keeping the materials fixed in temporary ways to allow for continual rebuilding and design changes or fix more permanently to make an instrument which can be decorated, played with and performed with.

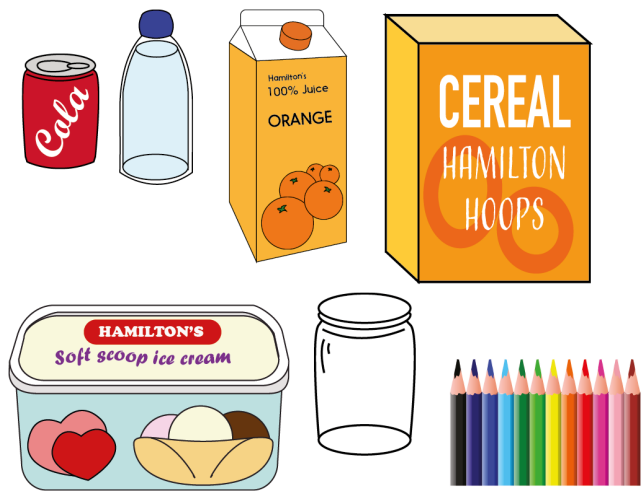
What you need

Recycled packaging (*such as boxes, tins, tubes, plastic tubs, paper, paper cups, jar lids, tins, bottle tops, cellophane wrappers*).

Things to make shaker filling (e.g. rice, sand)

String, elastic bands, ribbons, balloons

Pencils as beaters



Extension

Play along with your favourite music.

Make a band and play together.

Sing along with *I am the Music Man*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Pge14jv2Ss>

With careful supervision, make a water xylophone by filling jars or bottles with water to make different notes when you tap them.

Questions to ask

What sounds can we make?

How can we make a sound with this material?

Can you make the sound louder or quieter?

Can we make the pitch higher or lower?

How can we fix the materials together?

Can you make a rhythm/tune?

Lots of ideas for making musical instruments can be found at: <https://feltmagnet.com/crafts/Music-Instruments-for-Kids-to-Make>

Activity 3 – Exploring and playing

Blowing bubbles

What to do

- If making, make up the bubble mix in a container, adding the water to the soap slowly. Stir gently. *Make the day before for the best results.*
- Pour the mix in a shallow tray (keeping the rest in the container – this will reduce spillages) and place outside if possible.
- Provide a range of bubble blowing equipment and allow your child to experiment with them, trying different blowing techniques and bubble blowing tools.

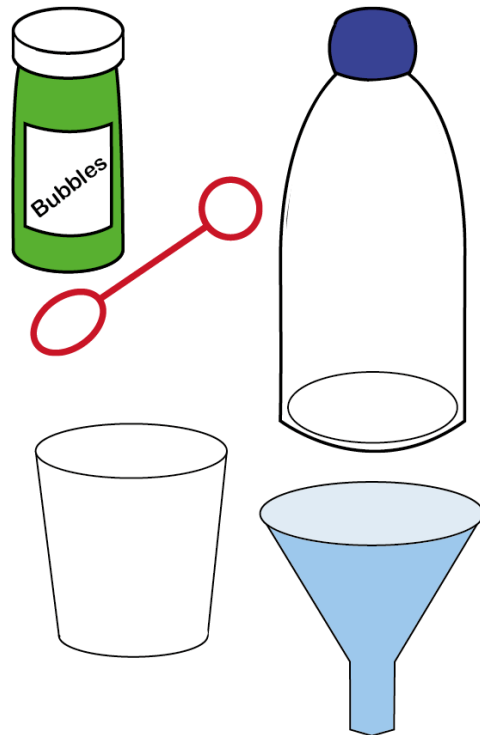
What you need

Bought bubble mix *or*
mix made with:

50ml washing-up liquid (one part)

300ml water (six parts)

Bubble blowing equipment: pastry cutters, bubble wands, pipe cleaners, a drinks bottle with the base cut out, plastic cup with hole in the base for blowing, plastic funnel
A shallow tray to hold the bubble mix for play and a container to make up and store the mix



Extension

Set challenges: Can you blow a big bubble, small bubbles, lots of bubbles, long bubbles?
Can you make bubbles which are not round?
Can you catch your bubbles without them popping?

Questions to ask

Can you blow some bubbles?
What happens when you blow? Where do the bubbles go? Can you make lots of small bubbles? How can you make a really big bubble? What shape are they?

Activity 4 – Exploring and playing

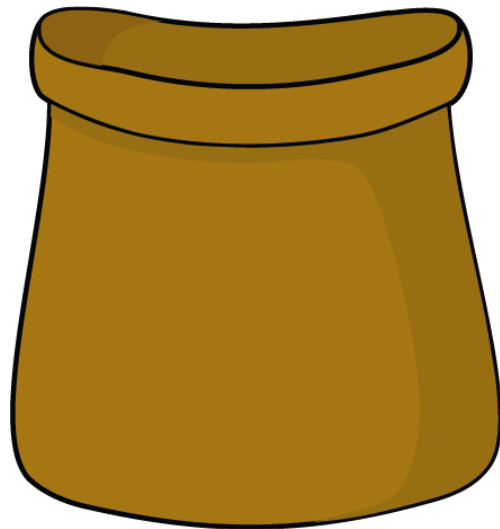
Exploring mystery objects in feely bag

What to do

- Place a selection of mystery objects in your bag.
- Challenge your child to identify the objects by putting their hand in the bag and feeling them.
- Encourage lots of talk about texture, shape and weight, e.g. *'What does it feel like? Is it hard and smooth or soft and fluffy?'*
- Reverse the game and put your hand in and describe what you feel. Can they guess what you are touching?
- Look away while your child chooses one of the items to put in the bag. Can you guess what they have chosen?

What you need

- A bag which hides the objects (e.g. *pillowcase, P.E. bag* etc.)
- Any object which will fit in the bag – aim for a variety (e.g. *small animal toys, hairbrush, deflated balloon, marble, dice, sock, leaf, squishy toy, sunglasses, feather, soft toy, hairband, facecloth, plastic cup* etc.)



Extension

- Use natural objects.
- Collect new objects to make a game for someone else.
- Make an 'odd one out' game with all of the objects bar one being of a type, e.g. 5 vegetables and a crayon. Can your child guess which was odd and say why?

Questions to ask

- What can you feel?
- What might it be? What makes you think that?
- Is it soft/hard/furry/smooth/bristly?
- What does it remind you of?
- Which object will be hard for me to guess?
- What else could we hide in the bag?
- Which is the odd one out?

Activity 5 – Exploring and playing

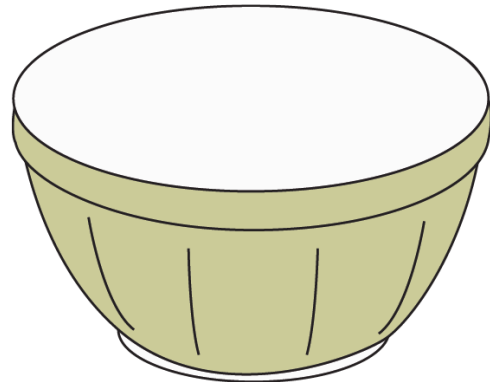
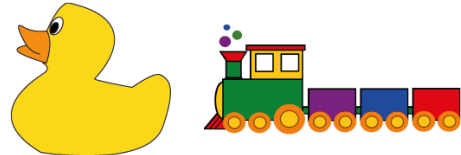
Freeing frozen toys

What to do

- The day before, fill the containers with water and then place toys in the water. Put them into the freezer overnight.
- Take the containers out for a few minutes to allow you to release the ice shapes from the containers. Place outside (or inside on a covered table) on a tray or in a bowl.
- Challenge your child to free the toys.
- On a warm day, children will enjoy watching the ice melt, handling it and helping the ice melt.

What you need

Small plastic toys or similar
Several plastic containers or freezer bags
A shallow tray, bowl or water table



Extension

Provide cold water and a jug to speed up the process.
Let your child have a turn to freeze their toys.
Try putting an object in a balloon and then filling with water. This makes an interesting shape.

Questions to ask

What do you think might be in there? Can you see through?
What does the ice feel like?
How will we get them out?
What will happen to the ice outside?
How long do you think the ice will take to melt?
Where will the ice go?
Can we make it melt faster?
What else could we freeze?

Activity 6 – Exploring and playing

Playing with playdough

What to do

- Before playing, help your child wash and dry their hands.
- The options are endless with playdough. Let them explore and play independently.
- Introduce play ideas:
 - Can you make our family, some cakes, a house, wiggly worms, a pattern, a garden, a face?
 - What prints/patterns can you make in the dough?
 - What can you push into the dough to make an animal, a monster, a farm?
 - Can you make different shapes?
 - Can you make numbers, letters, your name?
- Photograph to celebrate and if you want to reuse the dough for another day, keep in a sealed container.

What you need

Playdough (bought or made* – see below)
Tools to help with shaping and cutting, e.g. *rolling pin, cutters, board, pastry tools or table knife and a pencil*
Anything else which can be pressed into the dough



Extension

Set challenges linked to stories: *Can you make a bridge for the troll?*
Set challenges linked to number: *Can you make a cake with enough candles for...?*
Set challenges linked to position, direction or shape: *Can you make a circle, square and triangle biscuit? Can you make a nest with some eggs inside it? Can you make a pot with a lid on top?*

Questions to ask

What does the dough feel like? How can you change the shape? What patterns can you make?
Can you make some worms? Can you make a ball? How can you make a thin, flat shape?
Can you make shapes by pinching?
What are you making now? Tell me about your model.

*Simple 10 minute playdough recipe: <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/playdough-recipe>