

Early Years Inclusion Team

Messy Play Ideas

Introduction



Sensory activities provide children with a meaningful way to learn. Children learn best by having "hands on" experiences with materials, sensory experiences are vital to young children's learning. Children with tactile defensiveness are over sensitive to touch.

Messy play provides the child with a fun way to experience new textures. Increased exposure to a wide variety of textures can decrease the level of tactile defensiveness.

Materials

Water
Sand
Finger Paints
Playdoh
Crazy Soap
Bubbles
Cotton Wool
String/Wool
Glitter
Shaving Foam
Gloop
Chalk
Glue

The following messy play activity ideas will help to encourage children to explore lots of different textures and materials.

Water –

Half fill a large basin or bath with water and provide different types and sizes of containers for filling, measuring, pouring.

Play in the water with boats, ducks and fish.

Add a tiny drop of washing up liquid or bubble bath and use a straw to blow through and make lots of bubbles (food colouring can be added to make it more exciting). Be careful not to suck through the straw!

Sand –

Sand Pit – hide objects e.g. little animals, shells, marbles etc in the sand. Use both hands to dig in the sand until all objects have been found.

Water can be added to dampen the sand for making sandcastles.

Play in the sand with trucks, dumpers and diggers.

Place some dry sand onto a tray and spread out with both hands. Use fingers to draw shapes and patterns in the sand. Shake tray to make the patterns disappear.

Paints –

Spread paint onto a tray. Place hands in finger paint and press onto a large piece of paper to make handprints.

Spoon out different colours next to each other on the tray and gently swirl them around, place hands in and press onto paper.

Change the handprint into a fish by adding fins, eyes etc or make up a design of your own.

Spread paint onto a tray and place bare feet in it to then walk across a large piece of paper to make footprints.

Dip fingers into different colours of paint to make lovely pictures e.g. flowers, ladybirds, seaside picture etc.

Use sponges of different shapes and sizes to dip into paint and press onto paper.

Playdoh –

Mould playdoh animals/insects e.g. roll playdoh out using two hands to make a snake then curl it up from one end to the other to make a snail.

Roll pinch and mould the playdoh to make a plate of food e.g. roll out a sausage, roll tiny pieces of it between fingers to make peas or beans etc.

Bubbles –

Take turns. Catch and pop bubbles by clapping hands then swap and hold the wand to blow bubbles.

Cotton Wool-

Fill tub with cotton wool balls or tear lots of pieces off a roll of cotton wool. Hide lots of little objects in it and dig through the cotton wool until all objects are found.

Stick pieces of cotton wool onto card to make pictures e.g. stick a small amount of cotton wool onto card and draw or paint legs and a head to make it into a sheep, make a snow scene picture.

String/Wool-

Paint penne pasta and let it dry. Glue on sequins or glitter. Thread onto wool or string and tie ends together to make a necklace or bracelet.

Have a large piece of card or paper. Spoon different colours of paint onto a tray and pull string through it, drag string across the card to make different and interesting patterns.

Glitter –

Spread glue onto card and sprinkle glitter on or sprinkle over pictures in previous activities to make them sparkle!

Shave Foam –

Squirt into hands and spread over a large tray or mirror for drawing and making patterns.

Gloop –

Pour a decent amount of cornflour into a large bowl and add a little water at a time to form a slightly runny/pouring consistency.

Spread gloop over a tray, draw patterns and shapes in it and watch them disappear!

Scoop up handfuls of gloop and allow it to drizzle through hands onto the tray, make patterns.

Chalk –

Use thin or chunky chalk to draw shapes/patterns on a blackboard and make them disappear! You will need a paintbrush, a pot of water and a blackboard.

Draw with different coloured chalks on card or paper.

Pasta –

Fill a large tub or bowl with uncooked pasta and hide objects in it. Use hands to explore pasta until all objects are found. Progress onto using cooked pasta.

Rice –

Fill a large bowl or tub with dry rice, lentils or broth mixture and hide lots of little objects e.g. animals, shells, marbles, pieces of jigsaw etc in the rice. Use both hands to dig in the rice until all objects have been found. Play in the rice with trucks, dumpers and diggers.

Place some dry rice onto a tray and spread out with both hands. Use fingers to draw shapes and patterns in the rice. Shake the tray to make the patterns disappear.