

Recipes & Suggestions for Sensory and Creative Play!



Resources for Exceptional Children and Youth - Durham Region

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Benefits of Sensory Play

How Does Learning Happen? tells us that “children thrive in indoor and outdoor spaces that invite them to investigate, imagine, think, create, solve problems, and make meaning from their experiences - especially when the spaces contain interesting and complex open-ended materials that children can use in many ways.”

“The Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) recognizes unstructured play as a child’s right and a critical component to child and youth health and well-being.”

What better way to achieve these goals than through sensory play? Sensory play is any play that involves the senses in the experience.

Although we may think of sensory play as using materials we touch, sensory play can involve all the senses.

Sensory play involves:

- ✓ The tactile sensory system (touch)
- ✓ The auditory sensory system (hearing)
- ✓ The visual sensory system (sight)
- ✓ The olfactory system (smell)
- ✓ The vestibular sensory system (balance)
- ✓ The proprioception sensory system (ability to know where we are in space and how our limbs relate to the rest of our body)

When we are mindful of all the sensory systems, we plan for a whole-body experience.

By its nature, sensory play is unstructured, child-initiated and child-led. This play lends itself easily to “loose parts” play and facilitates learning on many levels.

There are many benefits to playing with sensory materials. Children learn best and memory is enhanced when multiple senses are used in the play and learning experience.

The joy and the complexity of sensory play is that many skills are learned during this experience. The benefits of sensory play encompass the very beginning of the development of skills when children learn to explore with their senses and process this information. Learning progresses from these basic skills to complex skills.

The following skills are developed, enhanced and practiced:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| ✓ Cognitive skills | ✓ Visual spatial skills |
| ✓ Language skills | ✓ Problem solving skills |
| ✓ Fine motor skills | ✓ Social skills |
| ✓ Gross motor skills | ✓ Body awareness skills |

In addition, sensory materials aid creative expression and self-regulation skills. Sensory play is not necessarily isolated to a special table, basin or tray. Sensory experiences should be present in all play, for example, the texture and weight of construction materials, or the smell and feel of grass when playing an active outdoor game.

Higher-level thinking develops when curiosity is encouraged and inquiry-based language is used during the sensory experience. Inquiry-based questions may include:

- ✓ What happened?
- ✓ What do you think will happen?
- ✓ What does it smell/feel/taste/sound/look like?
- ✓ What else can we do?
- ✓ Is it heavy/smooth/light/rough...?
- ✓ I wonder what would happen if....?
- ✓ Why did it do that?

Sensory play is a valuable way of engaging children in activities that will heighten their senses and enrich learning.



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Before you begin, remember:

- Sensory play is often messy. Explain to the children that it is ok to be messy.
- Sensory play is most beneficial when the children are able to plan their own play.
- All children may not want to participate.
- Be creative and ready to modify the activity for different learners.

References

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Taste-Safe Cake Mix Play Dough

Ingredients:

- 1 box white cake mix
- 1/2 cup oil
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- 5 tablespoons powdered sugar

Method:

1. Combine cake mix and oil in a bowl.
2. Add cornstarch into your dough and mix.
3. Slowly add in 5 tablespoons of powdered sugar a little at a time until you have reached your desired consistency.

Play Suggestions:

1. Add sprinkles or food colouring to dough.
2. Add muffin papers or create in muffin tins.
3. Add birthday candles.
4. Use cookie cutters to make shapes.

Crystal Lite Dough

Ingredients:

- 1 package of Crystal Lite/Kool-Aid
- 1 cup of mini marshmallows
- 2-4 cups of powdered sugar
- 2-4 tablespoons canola oil (any oil will work)

Method:

1. In a microwave-safe bowl, add the marshmallows and one tablespoon of oil.
2. Place in the microwave for 30-60 seconds.
3. Once marshmallows have melted, mix until combined and add one cup of powdered sugar to the bowl and mix.
4. Once mixed, sprinkle one cup of powdered sugar onto parchment paper or freezer paper.
5. Place mixture on to the powdered sugar and knead the rest of the powdered sugar, Crystal Lite/Kool-Aid and oil until slime is no longer sticky.

Play Suggestions:

1. Mold into unique shapes and designs.
2. Add scissors or kitchen tools to cut dough.
3. Experiment with different flavours of drink mix for different scents and colours.
4. Omit the drink mix for a white, stretchy dough.

Slow Motion Calm-Down Sensory Bottle

Ingredients:

- Clear hair gel
- Warm water
- 1 tall bottle
- Lego (2-stud bricks)
- Fine glitter
- Super Glue or tape to secure lid (optional)

Method:

1. Combine 1-part hair gel to 6 parts warm water. Let cool completely and settle.
2. Pour gel/water mix into the bottle.
3. Add a little fine glitter and your Lego bricks. Push the bricks below the surface to remove any air bubbles.
4. Fill the bottle right to the very top with the remaining mixture.
5. Put on lid, shake vigorously, and test your bottle. If the bricks fall too slowly, empty the mixture back into a bowl and add a little more warm water. Let cool again and re-test. If the bricks fall too quickly, mix in a little more hair gel. Let settle and re-test.
6. Once you are happy with the flow of your sensory bottle, secure the lid (a waterproof glue or wide, clear packaging tape will help to keep it secure from curious little fingers).
7. Flip your bottle over for some slow, relaxing breathing as you watch the bricks fall.

Play Suggestions:

1. Add different items based on child's interests.
2. Instead of glitter, try paint or food colouring.
3. Add small beads or letters/numbers.

“Lick and Stick” Stickers – Method 1

Ingredients:

- White Elmer’s Washable School Glue
- White vinegar
- Small paint or pastry brush
- Scissors or a craft punch
- An assortment of paper or picture cut-outs

Method:

1. In a bowl, mix together white Elmer’s Washable School Glue with an equal amount of white vinegar until you have a thin, milky liquid. Using a small paint brush or pastry brush, smear the back of the paper sparingly with the glue mixture.
2. Allow to dry, apply a second coat and allow to dry again.
3. Use scissors or a craft punch to cut out desired shapes.
4. Although the glue is non-toxic, it doesn’t taste very good, so for a mass sticking, use a dampened sponge to moisten the back of the stickers.

Play Suggestions:

1. Cut wrapping paper designs.
2. Draw pictures of your choice.
3. Cut out pictures of traffic signs, constructions signs, etc.
4. Cut photos of food from flyers.
5. Use pieces of paper to make a mosaic.
6. Cut out letters and numbers.

Moon Sand

Ingredients:

- 4 cups flour
- 1/2 cup baby oil

Method:

1. Mix together the flour and oil, getting in there with your hands until it doesn't feel oily anymore.
2. It takes a bit of kneading, so keep at it!

Play Suggestions:

1. Add small cups (empty apple sauce, yogurt cups, etc.).
2. Place spoons in the bin for scooping.
3. Add sand toys.
4. Dig, fill, and dump using construction toys.
5. Build structures by adding loose parts.
6. Add letters or numbers to sand and make prints.
7. Sprinkle cocoa powder to make "dirt".

Homemade Paste

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups of milk
- 3 teaspoons white vinegar
- 1 tablespoon baking soda
- Water

Method:

1. Heat the milk on low heat in a pan until warm.
2. Add white vinegar.
3. Keep heating and stirring until the milk separates into curds and whey.
4. Strain the mixture, keeping only the solid parts.
5. Mix what you have left into one big, slimy ball.
6. Put it back in the pan and add the baking soda and enough water to get the consistency of paste.
7. Heat on low until it starts to bubble, then turn it off and let it cool.

Play Suggestions:

1. Add spices for different scents.
2. Add food colouring to create different coloured paste.
3. Cut wrapping paper designs and glue to paper.
4. Draw pictures of your choice and glue to paper.
5. Cut out pictures of traffic signs, constructions signs, etc. and glue to paper.
6. Cut photos of food from flyers and glue to paper.
7. Use pieces of paper to make a mosaic.
8. Cut out letters and numbers and glue to paper.

Frosting Play Dough

Ingredients:

- 1 can of pre-made whipped frosting
- 1 cup of cornstarch

Method:

1. Place items in a bowl and mix until fully combined.
2. Enjoy playing with your Play Dough!

Play Suggestions:

1. Add sprinkles and/or food colouring for additional fun.
2. Add muffin tins/muffin papers.
3. Add birthday candles.
4. Use playdough mats.

Play Clay

Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup white School Glue
- 1 cup cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons mineral oil
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

Method:

1. Pour 3/4 of glue and 1 cup of cornstarch into a non-stick pot.
2. Stir well until fully combined.
3. Add 2 tablespoons of mineral oil and 1 tablespoon of lemon juice to the glue and cornstarch mixture.
4. Stir well until completely blended.
5. Transfer the pot to the stove and simmer over low heat/flame.
6. Stir constantly to keep the liquid ingredients moving. Do not let the mixture sit still as this will change the clay's texture.
7. Continue stirring the mixture until it resembles mashed potatoes. Once it has turned into a mashed potato consistency, remove from heat and place onto a cool/flat surface.
8. Add a small squirt of mineral oil to the mushy clay.
9. Transfer the clay to a countertop and knead the dough until it is smooth. The consistency should appear like well-worked pizza dough.
10. Roll into a ball of dough.
11. Store the finished dough into a resealable freezer bag that can be kept in the refrigerator.

Play Suggestions:

Use you clay to create:

- DIY sculptures
- Jewelry
- Ornaments
- Handprints

Banana Pudding Dough

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of cornstarch
- 1/4 cup of banana cream instant pudding mix
- 1/3 cup of warm water
- 1 handful of mini marshmallows

Method:

1. Gather all ingredients needed. Add 1/4 cup banana cream instant pudding mix into a bowl.
2. Add half of the cornstarch into a bowl.
3. Add 1/3 cup of warm water and mix.
4. Add remaining cornstarch and mix. *May be easier to use your hands over a spoon.
5. Add a handful of marshmallows and mix in with your hands.
6. Enjoy playing with your edible dough!

***Tip – If your slime is too sticky, add a little more cornstarch; if it is too dry/firm, add a little more water**

Play Suggestions:

In a bin, add plastic containers, cups, wooden blocks, or other loose parts to see how the dough behaves as you pour it over the various materials.

Salt Dough

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of flour
- 1/2 cup of salt
- 1/2 cup of cold water

Method:

1. Add all the ingredients and mix until combined.
2. Knead until mixture has a smooth texture.
3. This recipe will harden over time and can be painted when the creation is dry and hard.

Play Suggestions:

1. For quick-dry dough, use oven on low heat.
2. Create a “family tree” using handprints as leaves.
3. Add seasonal spices to the dough.
4. Create ornaments for special occasions.

Ghost Mud

Ingredients:

- 1 bar of Ivory Soap
- 1 roll of toilet paper
- 1 cup of warm water

Method:

1. Have the children remove all the toilet paper from the roll.
2. Place toilet paper in a large bin.
3. Grate the soap into small pieces.
4. Add to 1 cup of warm water, stir until combined.
5. Pour soapy water over toilet paper.
6. Mush until all toilet paper and soapy water has been combined.
7. Enjoy a smooth, slippery, pulpy mess.

Play Suggestions:

1. Instead of grating soap, try Ivory Explosion to create fragile, crumbly soap.
2. Add food colouring.
3. Shred toilet paper or remove cardboard from roll and soak whole roll.
4. Create snow people or a winter scene.
5. Use for dramatic play props.

Non-Toxic Finger Paint

Ingredients:

- 4 tablespoons of corn flour (or cornstarch)
- Cold water
- 1 cup of boiling water
- Liquid food colouring
- Edible glitter (optional)

Method:

1. Mix the corn flour with a little cold water, just enough to make a paste (use a small whisk to make sure there are no lumps).
2. Pour in the boiling water and continue whisking until smooth, then place on low heat on the stove until you see clear streaks in the mixture.
3. Turn off the stove and continue stirring until you get a thick, gooey paint.
4. Divide your paint into small bowls and add a different food colouring to each bowl, stirring to combine until completely coloured.
5. Sprinkle with edible glitter (optional).

Play Suggestions:

1. Place prepared paint into ice cube tray, add a popsicle stick and freeze for a frozen variation of paint.
2. Use spray bottle to paint.
3. Paint on snow.
4. Place paper inside resealable bag, add a couple drops of paint and a roller for a no-mess option.
5. Use toothbrush, paint brush or fingers for different experiences.

Oobleck

Ingredients:

Equal Parts of:

- Cornstarch
- Water
- Few drops of food colouring (optional)

Method:

1. Add water and cornstarch together until dissolved.
2. Finished product will appear solid.
3. When manipulated, it becomes liquid.

Play Suggestions:

1. Add gems, beads, or small stones.
2. Add seasonal shapes.
3. Add Pop Rocks candy.
4. Add glitter, confetti, or spices.
5. Create designs with utensils.

Liquid Starch

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 cup water

Method:

1. Place water in a pot and boil.
2. Mix cornstarch with a splash of water until combined.
3. Add cornstarch mixture to the boiling water and stir.
4. Continue stirring until mixture becomes thick and cloudy.
5. Allow to cool completely.

Play Suggestions:

Dip cloth or tissue paper into starch, form and allow to fully dry to create bowls, tissue paper people, ornaments and much more.

Scented Wipes

Ingredients:

- 1 roll of paper towel (cloth-like)
- 2 cups of water
- 2 tablespoons of liquid baby bath soap
- 1 tablespoon of baby oil
- 7-8 cup square container

Method:

1. Cut paper towel roll in half with a serrated knife (a bread knife works well).
2. Place one of the halves in the square container.
3. Boil 2 cups of water for 2 minutes.
4. Add liquid bath soap and baby oil to the boiled water.
5. Pour mixture evenly over paper towels.
6. Pull out the cardboard core of the paper towel roll. It will come out easily once wet.
7. Place lid on container.
8. Keep the lid securely on the container until ready to use.
9. Start by pulling the wipes from the centre of the roll, then replace lid after each use.
10. The wipes should stay wet and fresh for up to one week. If you haven't used all of the wipes and they start to dry out, simply add some boiled water to refresh the roll.

Play Suggestions:

1. Place wet wipes in a bin with baby dolls.
2. Allow children to wipe and clean areas of the room.
3. Use in a "spa".

Shampoo Dough

Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup flour
- 1/4 cup white glue
- 1/4 cup thick cream shampoo (Suave/Pantene work well)
- Bowl
- Paint (optional)

Method:

1. Mix all ingredients in a bowl until combined and knead into dough.
2. Add more flour if needed.
3. Roll or model with your dough.

Play Suggestions:

1. Use cookie cutters to make shapes.
2. Use in dramatic play to create monsters, animals, etc.
3. Mold into letters or numbers based on children's interest.

Sand Volcano

Ingredients:

- Sand
- A sand bucket or cup
- Baking soda
- Vinegar
- Food colouring (optional)

Method:

1. Begin by placing a sand bucket (or bottle) in the sand right-side-up.
2. Pack sand upwards and around the bucket to form the shape of a volcano.
3. Place baking soda into the bottle (amount depends on the size of bucket or bottle).
4. Pour vinegar into the bucket or bottle and watch the volcano explode.

Play Suggestions:

1. Put it out as an “invitation” with dinosaurs at a table.
2. Create your volcano outside in a sandbox or inside in a sand table.
3. Add different colours to the bottle and see what colour emerges when the volcano explodes.
4. Add glitter.

Glowing Blood Slime

Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon soluble fiber (e.g., Metamucil)
- 1 cup of diet tonic water
- Red food colouring

Method:

1. Stir the fiber into the tonic water.
2. Add a drop or two of food colouring. The slime gets darker during preparation, so do not add too much.
3. Heat the liquid in a microwave-safe container until it boils. Depending on your microwave power this may be anywhere from 1-4 minutes. When the mixture boils, pause the microwave and stir the slime.
4. Cook in the microwave another 1-2 minutes and stir.
5. Repeat the cooking/stirring cycle a total of 4-5 times, until the slime develops a gel-like consistency. Carefully remove the slime from the microwave – it will be VERY hot.
6. Let the slime cool before you handle it. You can play with it, decorate with it, or even eat it. No matter what colour you make the slime, it will glow blue-white under a black light or ultraviolet light.
7. Store your slime in a sealed bowl or plastic bag. If you are just decorating with it, it will be fine at room temperature, but if you plan on putting the slime in your mouth – it is a good idea to refrigerate leftovers.

Play Suggestions:

1. Use for Halloween activities
2. Use as blood for first-aid/dramatic play ideas

Rainbow Glitter Galaxy Bottle

Ingredients:

- Hot water
- Coloured glitter glue
- Empty water or pop bottle

Method:

1. Pour 1 1/2 cups of water into a measuring cup.
2. Squeeze 1-2 tablespoons of glitter glue into the water.
3. Mix well with a whisk.
4. Give it a final stir and pour the mixture into your bottle.
5. Place lid on bottle and give it a shake.
6. Add more glitter if desired.
7. Seal lid with tape or hot glue.

Play Suggestions:

1. Use as a relaxation activity by watching and moving like the glitter inside the bottle.
2. Try confetti instead of glitter.
3. Place in calming area.
4. Use less glitter and add items to make an Eye-Spy game.

Play Snow

Ingredients:

- Baking soda
- Shaving cream (fluffy kind – not gel)
- Bowl
- Measuring cup

Method:

1. Pour 1 cup of baking soda in a bowl.
2. While mixing, add in the shaving cream slowly until you get the snow consistency that you like.

Play Suggestions:

1. Add animals to create a winter scene.
2. Add sparkles or colouring to create different coloured snow.

“Lick and Stick” Stickers – Method 2

Ingredients:

- 1 package of unflavoured gelatin
- 4 tablespoons of boiling water
- 1 teaspoon of light corn syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon of flavouring extract
- A variety of paper or picture cut-outs

Method:

1. Add gelatin to the boiling water and stir until dissolved.
2. Stir in corn syrup and flavouring.
3. Paint sticker “gum” on backs of desired pictures.
4. After the back of the paper is coated, allow to dry completely.
5. Once dry, lick and stick as desired.

Play Suggestions:

1. Try flavoured gelatin.
2. Create a sticker workshop/group.
3. Make seasonal stickers.
4. Make stickers for gifts.
5. Try using different papers and textures.
6. Cut out designs from wrapping paper.
7. Draw pictures.
8. Cut out pictures of traffic signs.
9. Cut out food from flyers.
10. Use pieces of coloured paper to make a mosaic.
11. Cut out numbers/letters.

Soap Sludge

Ingredients:

- Leftover pieces from bars of soap (or you can use a whole bar)
- Water
- Jar

Method:

1. Place soap pieces in a jar.
2. Cover the soap with water.
3. Let the jar sit for a day or two. You've got sludge!

Play Suggestions:

1. Use sludge to wash dolls/toys.
2. Add food colouring using a dropper to explore colour mixing.
3. Make 3D shapes.
4. Use spray bottles to make soap bubbles.

Cloud Dough

Ingredients:

- 2 cups flour
- 1/4 vegetable oil

Method:

1. Combine ingredients together and mix well.

Play Suggestions:

1. Make winter activities by creating snow scenes or Arctic scenes with animals.
2. Build sandcastles.
3. Create landscapes.
4. Add glitter.
5. Add spices to change the sensory experience.

Sand Foam

Ingredients:

- 3 cups of sand
- 1 can of shaving cream
- 1 tray

Method:

1. Place sand on tray.
2. Add shaving cream until desired consistency is reached.

Play Suggestions:

1. Add dinosaurs, shells, and toy cars to extend play and encourage imaginative play.
2. Hide plastic alphabet letters, numbers, or other items to create a Hide-and-Seek alphabet game.
3. Use descriptive language to describe the experience. How does the sand foam feel? It feels soft, fluffy and gritty, etc.
4. Draw in foam on a tray.
5. Write names, letters, numbers, draw shapes, pictures.
6. Add different colours to shaving cream or add glitter.

Monster Snot

Ingredients:

- 2-in-1 shampoo
- Opaque toothpaste
- Toothpick
- Green food colouring

Method:

1. In a bowl add 1-part toothpaste to 2 parts 2-in-1 shampoo.
2. Add food colouring.
3. Stir everything together with a toothpick (you can also use a popsicle stick or even a small spoon).
4. Keep stirring until the shampoo and toothpaste come together to form a snotty, sticky slime. This will take about a minute or so.
5. Adjust the consistency if needed.
6. When you are done playing with the snot, put it into a small plastic jar with a tight-fitting lid.

Play Suggestions:

1. Decorate pictures of monsters.
2. Make a paper mâché monster and give it “snot”.
3. Make it any colour.
4. Create a “snail trail” in a mini garden.

Homemade Bubbles

Ingredients:

- 6 cups of water
- 1 cup of dish soap
- 1 tablespoon of glycerin

Method:

1. Combine all ingredients together and mix well.

Play Suggestions:

1. Use various open items to blow bubbles, such as colander, slotted spoon.
2. Pipe cleaners.
3. Run and wave with large wands.

Salt Sculptures

Ingredients:

- 3 cups of salt
- 3 teaspoons of water
- Some sort of mold (bottle, glass, plastic sandcastle, etc.)

Method:

1. Add 3 cups of salt and 3 teaspoons of water to a bowl.
2. Stir extremely well – every bit of salt should appear wet and crumbly. If there is still dry salt, continue to stir.
3. Once your salt is evenly crumbly and damp, spoon or pour it into your mold and press hard to compact it.
4. Leave it in the mold for 12 or more hours (24 hours or more is ideal).
5. Remove from the mold and enjoy playing with your creation!

Play Suggestions:

1. Make handprints and let harden before painting.
2. Make ornaments.
3. Create a sculpture and paint when hardened.
4. Use eye dropper, paint brush, or spray paint to paint the sculpture.

Bread Dough – Method 2

Ingredients:

- 1 cup white bread
- 1 tablespoon water
- 1 teaspoon salt

Multiply the recipe as needed.

Method:

1. Blend, or mash up pieces of bread. Break it down into small pieces – hand ripping is fine too!
2. Put the pieces of bread into a bowl and add the necessary amount of water/salt.
3. Mix well.
4. Knead the dough on a clean surface – when it sticks together and is pliable, it is ready.
5. Store in an air-tight container and refrigerate unused dough.

Play Suggestions:

Make clay projects: for bread dough:

1. It is ideal for making beads
2. Figurines
3. Other small clay projects

Play Dough – Method 1

Ingredients:

- 3 cups of flour
- 1/4 cup of salt
- 1 tablespoon Cream of Tartar
- 2 cups of boiling water
- 3 tablespoons of oil

Method:

1. Add boiling water to bowl.
2. Add any colouring or food flavouring if desired.
3. Add salt and stir until dissolved.
4. Add oil, flour and Cream of Tartar.
5. Stir until combined and knead until desired consistency is reached.

Play Suggestions:

1. Add Kool-Aid.
2. Add pure cocoa.
3. Add food colouring.
4. Add sand.
5. Add oatmeal.
6. Add glitter.
7. Add spices.
8. Add sticks/stones.
9. Add animals, people, or statues.
10. Use muffin liners or tins.
11. Roll dough into snakes and create unique shapes or letters.

Play Snow

Ingredients:

- 2 1/2 cups baking soda
- 1/2 white hair conditioner

Method:

1. Mix baking soda and conditioner in a large bowl.
2. Combine well.
3. Add more baking soda for a denser consistency.

Play Suggestions:

1. Add animals to create a winter scene.
2. Add sparkles or food colouring to create different coloured snow.

Paper Mâché Paste

Ingredients:

- One-part flour
- Three parts water

Method:

1. Mix a little of water with some of the flour to make a smooth paste.
2. When paste is smooth, add the rest of the water.
3. Heat mixture until it boils.
4. Stir constantly.
5. Turn heat down and let paste simmer until thick.
6. Remove from the heat and let cool.
7. Use the paste when it is cold.

Play suggestions:

1. Use pieces of paper to form sculptures.
2. Place wet strips of paper over a balloon (leaving a small opening); when dry, pop the balloon and remove it; now you have a ball, piñata or ornament.

Rainstick Bottle

Ingredients:

- Water bottle
- Goo Gone
- A handful of sticks and twigs
- Rice
- Super Glue

Method:

1. Grab a bottle and remove all of the sticky residue from the sticker with Goo Gone if needed.
2. Fill the bottle with sticks and twigs.
3. Add 5-10 teaspoons of rice into the bottle.
4. Place the lid on the bottle.
5. Tape or glue the lid shut.

Play suggestions:

1. Use different materials and objects to compare sounds e.g., beans instead of rice.
2. Place in calm area.
3. Use as a musical instrument.

Sticky Sand

Ingredients:

- 5 cups of play sand
- 3 cups of all-purpose flour
- 1 cup of vegetable oil

Method:

1. Add all ingredients in a bowl.
2. Mix until fully combined.

Play suggestions:

1. Exfoliate your skin at the “spa.”
2. Add additional oil for a more moldable texture.
3. Molding sand can be used for sculpting and creating sandcastles/village.
4. Create landscapes e.g., beach with shells.

Chia Taste-Safe Goop

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup chia seeds
- 1 3/4 cup water
- Food colouring
- 3-4 cups cornstarch

Method:

1. Mix the chia seeds, water and food colouring together.
2. Cover and refrigerate overnight.
3. Uncover and add the cornstarch a little at a time.
4. Mix until you achieve the desired consistency. It should be slimy but can be easily take off the hands.
5. Store covered in the refrigerator. You will need to add a little water each time you take it out to reactivate the mixture.

Play suggestions:

1. Try using basil seeds instead of chia seeds.
2. Add glitter to the mixture.
3. Include tweezers to pick out seeds.
4. Add gelatin to the mixture for a different consistency.

Taste-Safe Water Beads

Ingredients:

- Quick-cook tapioca pearls
- A pot
- Water
- Food colouring (optional)
- A sensory bin or container for play

Note: You can find tapioca pearls at most Asian food markets. Make sure you get quick tapioca pearls that can be prepared in 5 minutes.

Method:

1. Begin by filling a large pot with water and bringing it to a boil.
2. Add the tapioca pearls and stir.
3. Cover the pot and cook over medium heat for 5-7 minutes.
4. Once cooked, drain the tapioca pearls and run them under cold water for several minutes.
5. Kids can play with the pearls once they are cool, or you can add extra colouring for even more fun.

Play suggestions:

1. Use less water to make a gel like consistency.
2. Add cornstarch to the prepared tapioca to create a stretchy dough.
3. Hide a variety of objects in the prepared mixture for a slimy hide and seek game.

Rainbow Stew

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup of sugar
- 1 cup of cornstarch
- 2-4 cups cold water

Method (stovetop):

1. Add cornstarch and water to a pot and mix well.
2. Cook on high heat for about 6 minutes (it will bubble and pop, so be careful!)
3. When mixture becomes thick and cloudy remove from heat.
4. Put mixture into different bowls and add different colours to each bowl. Allow to cool, mixture will become gel like.

Method (microwave):

1. In microwave-safe bowl add ingredients.
2. Cook for 2 minutes then mix, put back in for an additional minute.
3. Add colouring as desired.
4. Allow to cool completely.

Play suggestions:

1. Add food colouring.
2. Add paint.
3. Add glitter.
4. Add small items e.g., Lego.
5. Add cooled mixture into resealable bags for a no-mess option.

White Bread Clay

Ingredients:

- 1 to 2 slices of white bread, crusts removed
- 1 tablespoon white glue

Method:

1. Have the children rip one slice of bread into tiny pieces into a bowl. Add the white glue to the breadcrumbs, and mix with a fork until all the crumbs are moistened.
2. Roll a bit of the mix between your fingers to check its consistency. The mix should be pliable and somewhat sticky. If it feels very wet or too gummy to roll into a ball, tear up and mix in a little more bread.
3. Have the children gather the dough into a ball. Knead it for a minute or two or roll between palms. Soon the dough will become elastic and satin-like. As the children model the dough, it may begin to dry out. If it does, dip fingertips in water (have a small bowl at the worktable) and knead the dough until it becomes more pliable.

Drying time: White bread dough air-dries in 1 to 3 days.

Play suggestions:

1. Make clay projects. The bread dough is ideal for making beads, figurines and other small clay projects.
2. Make Beads:
 - a. Shape the bread into beads.
 - b. Pierce each bead at the end of a skewer and thread it along the skewer.
 - c. Bake in a slow oven (around 130°C / 250°F) until firm.

If you have made other shapes, bake them using the directions above.

3. Decorate the cooled beads or shapes with paint or markers as desired.
4. To add a hard, semi-gloss finish, your child can mix equal parts water and white glue and brush on several coats.

Hair Conditioner Dough

Ingredients:

- 2 cups cornstarch
- 1 cup inexpensive hair conditioner
- Food colouring (optional)

Method:

1. Mix ingredients together until desired consistency.
2. Enjoy playing with your dough!

Play suggestion:

1. Add sprinkles or food colouring to dough.
2. Add muffin papers or create in muffin tins.
3. Add birthday candle.
4. Use cookie cutters to make shapes.

Hot Cocoa Flubber

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon Metamucil or store-brand psyllium-based fiber powder
- 1/2 cup (about 2 packets) hot cocoa mix (no marshmallows)

Method:

1. In a large microwave-safe bowl, whisk together the Metamucil and the water for about 1 minute.
2. Microwave on high for 5 minutes. Keep an eye on it and pause the microwave for a few seconds if it looks like it's going to bubble over.
3. Remove from the microwave and stir.
4. It's hot, so make sure you allow it to cool before handing.

Play suggestions:

1. Create an animal habitat; use it as dirt/ground.
2. Smell.
3. Experiment using different powders e.g., Kool-Aid, Jell-O.
4. Add a variety of scoops, spoons and bowls.

Unpoppable Bubbles

Ingredients:

- 3 cups distilled water
- 1 cup dish soap
- 1/2 cup corn syrup

Method:

1. Stir together slowly.
2. Use a bubble wand or straw to make bubbles.
3. Enjoy playing with your bubbles!

Play suggestions:

1. Use a glove to catch bubbles.
2. Use large open containers for bigger bubbles.
3. Add some mixture to paint and use straws to blow the paint across paper for a unique painting experience.

Play Dough – Method 2

Ingredients:

- 2 1/2 cups of flour
- 1/2 cup of salt
- 1 tablespoon alum
- 2 cups boiling water
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil

Method:

1. Mix the dry ingredients first.
2. Add the boiling water and vegetable oil.
3. Mix well and knead.
4. Add small amount of oil or flour to reach desired consistency.
5. Enjoy playing with your dough!

Play suggestions:

1. Add spices for a different sensory experience.

Sensory Dough

Ingredients:

- 1 cup cornstarch
- 1 large box of Jell-O
- Water

Method:

1. In a large bowl add cornstarch and Jell-O.
2. Add water 1 tsp at a time until desired consistency.
3. If too much water was added, add more cornstarch or add more water if the mixture becomes too thick.

Play suggestions:

1. Put in a resealable bag for a no-mess option.
2. Add a variety of utensils to explore the dough experience.
3. Add plastic animals to the dough.
4. Make landscapes with the dough.
5. Create an ocean sensory bin or swamp.

Ivory Explosion Experiment

Ingredients:

- Ivory Soap Bar (needs to be Ivory!)
- Microwave
- Bowl or plate

Method:

1. Place soap bar in the microwave on a microwavable container.
2. Microwave for 2 minutes.
3. Ask the kids to predict what will happen.
4. Watch the soap while you microwave!

Play suggestions:

1. Add droppers of food colouring to the soap to continue the experience.
2. Use the soap in a bin of water and cars.
3. Whisk water to make foam.
4. Use the soap to fill cookie cutters and form new soap bars in different shapes.

Play Snow

Ingredients:

- Shaving cream
- Cornstarch

Method:

1. Pour 1 cup of cornstarch into a bowl and mix in the shaving cream slowly until you get the consistency that you like.

Play suggestions:

1. Add glitter.
2. Mold into a variety of shapes using different containers.
3. Add plastic utensils to explore the snow.

Play With Your Food

Ingredients:

- Applesauce
- Pudding
- Oatmeal
- Whipped cream
- Coconut whipped topping
- Cool Whip

Method:

1. Play with the above ingredients.
2. These can be dyed with food colouring if desired.

Play suggestions:

1. Scoop with spoon, place spoon in freezer.
2. Place item on clean surface for exploration.
3. Add a variety of play props like shovels or dolls.

Dandelion Play Dough

Ingredients:

- A big handful of dandelion heads
- 1 cup of boiling water
- 2 cups of flour
- 1/3 cup of salt
- 2 tablespoons baby oil (or vegetable oil)
- 1-2 tablespoons Cream of Tartar

Method:

1. Boil water.
2. Dissolve salt in water.
3. Add oil.
4. Add flour, Cream of Tartar and dandelions.
5. Combine.
6. Add flour if mix is sticky/wet.

Play suggestions:

1. Try blending the dandelions into the boiling water to create an entirely new experience.
2. Add whole dandelions and leaves to the experience.
3. Add grass, herbs, and pansies to the dough.
4. Add scissors to cut the dough.

Note: Ensure plants/herbs and flowers are clean and safe for children.

Chocolate Goo

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup cornstarch
- 1 tablespoon cocoa powder
- 1/3 cup coconut milk

Method:

1. Add heaping 1/2 cup of cornstarch and 1 tablespoon cocoa powder to a medium mixing bowl.
2. Whisk together until well combined and you have a light brown powder.
3. Heat 1/3 cup coconut milk in microwave until warm (not steaming or boiling) this should take about 20 seconds. Make sure to use a microwave-safe bowl and handle with care.
4. Pour warm coconut milk into mixing bowl with cornstarch and cocoa powder.
5. Mix together with a spoon until a smooth mixture begins to form. You'll be able to easily scoop the putty out of the bowl by hand.
6. Enjoy playing with your goo!

Play suggestions:

1. In a sensory bin make interesting shapes in the goo and see if the children can guess what they are.
2. Finger paint with the mixture.
3. Add plastic animals to the goo.
4. Experiment with different containers.

Pudding Dough

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup of instant pudding
- 1 cup of cornstarch
- 1/3 cup warm water

Method:

1. Mix the ingredients together in a bowl and then knead.

Play suggestions:

1. Try mixing different flavours of pudding to create a new sensory experience.
2. Create a variety of awesome taste-sensory experiences.
3. Roll the mixture into desired shapes.
4. Add cutting tools to the experience.

Kinetic Sand

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of play sand
- 1/2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon dish soap
- 1 cup of water (*add as needed*)

Method:

1. Begin by combining the play sand and corn starch in a large bin or container.
2. In a separate bowl combine the soap and water.
3. Add water as needed, mix well.
4. Allow to dry slightly until the mixture sticks together and no longer feels wet to the touch.
5. Store in an airtight container.
6. If your sand becomes dry, add a bit of water as needed.

Play suggestions:

1. Add food colouring to change the sand colour.
2. Add kitchen utensils to manipulate the sand.
3. Add dinosaurs, rocks or small trucks for small world play.
4. Use letters to stamp or play seek-and-find.
5. Build sandcastle or a village.
6. Use to create a 3D shape lesson.

Fizzy Dough

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of flour
- 1 cup of baking soda
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- Vinegar

Method:

1. Place flour, baking soda and oil into a bin or large bowl.
2. Allow the children to drip or drop vinegar onto the mixture to create a fun, fizzy experience.

Play suggestions:

1. Use eyedroppers to drop vinegar on the mixture.
2. Make dough into seasonal shapes e.g., pumpkins or apples and use droppers with vinegar.
3. Use spray bottles of vinegar (add colouring if desired).
4. Add plastic animals or cars into the dry mixture.

Liquid Sugar Starch

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup water
- 1 1/2 cup sugar

Method:

1. Place ingredients in medium sauce pan.
2. Simmer the liquid until clear. Be careful not to boil the liquid.

Play suggestions:

1. Dip cloth in starch and place over items until hard; once cloth is hard, separate from item.
2. Use a brush to cover cloth with tissue paper art with the starch. Allow to dry fully.

***Tip – Use plastic wrap in between the mold and starched item for easy removal and clean-up.**

Homemade Plaster of Paris

Ingredients:

- Water
- 2 cups of flour

Method:

1. Heat 1 cup of water to 100 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Combine 2 cups of flour in the mixing bowl and pour water over the flour as evenly as possible.
3. Mix the water and flour together until there are no lumps. Plaster should be thick but not difficult to stir.
4. Work with the plaster for 10 minutes and place into molds.
5. Let the plaster sit in mold for 48 hours.

Play Suggestions:

1. Use muffin tins as molds.
2. Use cookie/cake pans to make a giant mold.
3. Make lasting memories such as handprints or foot prints that can later be painted or decorated.

Food Dye

Ingredients:

- 1/2 tsp vinegar
- Few drops of food colouring or use colourful fruits/vegetables e.g.,:
 - Cabbage
 - Onion skins
 - Beets
 - Spinach
 - Turmeric
 - Blueberries, strawberries, raspberries
 - Coffee/tea
 - Carrots

Method:

1. Use resealable bag or reusable container to mix.
2. Empty contents onto paper towel.
3. Allow to dry completely.

Play Suggestions:

1. You could try dyeing the following:

- Chick peas
- Noodles/pasta
- Oatmeal
- Hay
- Rice
- Puffed wheat
- Shredded paper
- Corn kernels
- Lentils

2. Consider allowing the children to dye material in individual bags.

***Note – Most beans are toxic when raw. Please be mindful of the items you choose to have available for the children.**

Apple Cinnamon Play Dough

Ingredients:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup salt
- 2 tablespoons Cream of Tartar
- 1 heaping tablespoon cinnamon
- 1 heaping tablespoon apple pie spice
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 1 1/3 cup boiling water

Method:

1. Add all the dry ingredients together in a bowl.
2. Slowly stir in 1 1/3 cups boiling water.
3. Mix and knead with hands until it forms a ball.
4. Let sit for 10 minutes to cool and then it's ready for play.

This playdough can be stored in an airtight container.

Play suggestions:

1. Add to dramatic play for a bakery.
2. Use it in a "smell" sensory activity with blindfolds and other scents for children to guess or describe the smell.
3. Add muffin tins, rolling pins, scoops and bowls.
4. Use play dough mats.

Metamucil Flubber

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon Metamucil (with psyllium fiber)
- 1 cup water (or 3/4 cups water for a more Flubber-like consistency)

Method:

1. In a large microwave-safe bowl, whisk together the Metamucil and the water for about 1 minute.
2. Microwave on high for 5 minutes. Keep an eye on it and pause the microwave for a few seconds if it looks like it's going to bubble over.
3. Remove from the microwave and stir.
4. It's hot, so make sure you allow it to cool before handling it.

Play suggestions:

1. Make it in seasonal colours e.g., black and orange for Halloween.
2. Create a "Monster Challenge" by adding eyes, pipe cleaners, other loose parts to create monsters.

Play Dough – Method 3

Ingredients:

- 3 cups of flour
- 1 cup of water
- 1/2 cup of salt
- 1/4 cup of oil
- Food colouring, Kool-Aid Mix, or Jell-O Mix

Method:

1. Mix all the ingredients in a large bowl (if adding food colouring, put in the water; if adding Kool-Aid or Jell-O mix, add it to the flour).
2. Knead the dough until the colour is mixed well and the dough is smooth.
3. Add a little water if it is too dry or a little flour if it is too sticky.
4. Keep the playdough in an airtight container.

Play suggestions:

1. Use in dramatic play kitchen or restaurant by using dough for food.
2. Make mountains and hills for small plastic animals and cars to roam through.
3. Provide mini muffin and loaf pans, rolling pins and cookie cutters.
4. Provide dry pastas (spaghetti, fettuccini, and rotini), pipe cleaners, toothpicks, popsicle sticks, candles, straws cut at different lengths, scissors for cutting.

Giant Bubbles

Ingredients:

- 6 cups water (distilled is best but tap water is fine)
- 1/2 cup Blue Dawn dish detergent
- 1/2 cup cornstarch
- 1 tablespoon baking powder (not baking soda)
- 1 tablespoon glycerin

Method:

1. Dissolve cornstarch in the water, stirring really well.
2. Stir in the rest of the ingredients, being very careful not to create a lot of froth.
3. Allow your bubble mixture to sit for at least an hour, stirring occasionally when you see the cornstarch settling to the bottom.

Play suggestions:

Best weather for these is a cloudy day with high humidity and a little wind.

1. After dipping your wand, hold your arms and wand up and slowly walk backwards to let the air go into the bubble.
2. Make a large wand using 2 two sticks and a loop of string attached between the sticks; dip the string into the solution and slowly open it after it has been dipped.

Some thoughts on a no-mess sensory experience:

- No-mess options may be helpful during the following:
- Times of transition
- For children who require close supervision
- For children to enjoy a sensory experience without the risk of consuming materials while learning
- Mobile sensory experiences
- Here a few ideas for a no-mess sensory experience:
- Sensory bottles (see recipes on pages 9, 25, 38)
- Sniffy Jars:
 - Use a container with holes, for example a salt shaker or spice jar.
 - Add food items to the jar e.g., onion, cinnamon stick or citrus rind.
 - Soak a cotton ball in scented liquid, wring out, and place in a jar with a secured lid.
 - Try pickle juice, Jell-O powder, etc.
 - Feely Bags
 - Use a resealable bag.
 - Add any sensory recipe, preferably liquid e.g., liquid paint.
 - Seal the bag by using tape along the zippered edge and place on the floor or table.

Additional Activities:

- Try placing a piece of paper with drops of paint inside a resealable bag. Seal the bag and squish the paint across the paper. Add tools inside the bag for a no-mess painting activity.
- Try these items for different sensory experiences:
 - Hair gel
 - Shaving cream
 - Oil and water
 - Conditioner
 - Cooked oatmeal



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