



Sensory Play

The Value of Sensory Experiences

Children learn everything about their world through their five senses - touch, taste, smell, sound and sight. A small child explores the world through as many senses as they can, usually through examining it carefully with their hands, feet and mouth. In providing different experiences using a variety of senses, we can maximise the learning for the child in ways that they enjoy.

Taste

- Provide some cooking at playgroup and taste what you have made at snack time.
- Have a simple taste test with a few different fruits or other foods. Be aware of children's food allergies.
- Celebrate a special day - provide multicultural foods at snack time.
- Taste ice.
- Taste foods that are salty, sour, sweet and bitter.

Smell

- Put essences into the playdough. You can also put in different dried herbs.
- Pick some flowers from the garden and place on a special table for all the children to enjoy.
- Enjoy the smell of cooking experiences.

Touch

- Use tuff trays and allow children to touch and really feel their way around various substrates. You can use legumes, child-safe slime, gloop, cooked spaghetti, coloured rice, leaves, jelly, shaving cream or more.
- Put together some sensory boards. These are easy to make using cardboard, cover the card in whichever material you like, it could be fluffy faux fur, fine-grade sandpaper, textured paper, bobbly material, cotton wool and more.
- Use a box with different types of material inside, the children can place their hands in and pull out out a different texture each time. Talk about what it feels like, what texture do they prefer?
- Have a sandpit available for a sensory play experience. You can use a clamshell and purchase sandpit sand which is clean and sanitary. Be sure to cover at end of use to make sure it stays clean.





Sight

- Peek-a-boo - Children love to see themselves in a mirror. Surprise them by placing the dress up mirror at the end of a tunnel that they can crawl through or near the cubby house door. You can also cover baby in a light cloth and play peek-a-boo (you will need to pull the cloth off if they cannot do so themselves).
- Make bubbles - watch them rise into the air and pop.
- Add some dye to the water trough.
- Lay on the grass and look at the clouds.
- Play with puppets.
- Do some face painting and let the children look in the mirror.
- Use the parachute. The children can lay under and watch the parachute go up and down.
- Add some extra sparkle to a shaker with glitter or tinsel.
- Fill clear bottles with different coloured water. Add a small amount of detergent into each bottle to make some coloured bubbles form.
- Provide flash cards with pictures of different objects pasted onto them.
- Make a photo album from playgroup photos taken on special days/events.

Sound

- Musical instruments. Play them slow / fast, loud / soft.
- Listen to different types and styles of music - classical, jazz, multicultural and lullabies.
- Tape different sounds at playgroup and play back to the children.
- Make your own rattles and shakers. Put different materials inside each one and talk about the different sounds they make.
- Sing songs, read / tell stories and rhymes - not just a group time.
- Provide musical baby toys.
- Listening games.

