

SENSORY BABY PLAY



Sensory Play for Babies Involves

- Babies using all their senses in the process of exploration.
- Offering babies plenty of opportunity to smell, touch, taste, look at and manipulate different materials. Remember to add language that describes the materials and what baby is doing.
- This sort of play is important because its lack of a focus on making or producing something leaves the child free to explore all sorts of possibilities. It taps into children's innate curiosity about the world around them and their strong desire to explore and find out more.
- Nurture freedom of expression - Remember that sensory activities use open ended materials, there is no right or wrong way of playing with them. It is important to let your baby just explore the materials. Play some soothing music to set the atmosphere (or jazz it up with some faster paced music and watch your baby's reactions—which do they prefer?)



Extending Sensory Play

- Sensory - place different textures onto the floor, have children crawl and roll over and explore them. Textures might include sandpaper, material, ribbons, artificial grass.
- Sensory tunnel - place items in the tunnel to be discovered e.g. large smooth rock, wooden block
- Scarf boxes- tie different materials together and place inside a box to be pulled out and discovered.
- Toddlers enjoy using tools and toys as part of play for poking, prodding, digging, pouring, tipping, hiding and finding toys. This is a good opportunity for your child to play.



Sensory play will enhance your baby's senses. It gives babies a chance to explore a variety of textures. During Sensory play, babies are developing hand eye coordination and fine motor skills. Sensory play is also possible, in one form or another, for all babies no matter what their abilities.

Sensory play often involves messy play which for adults can be a lot of work and sometimes a bit stressful. There are, however, many benefits of messy play. Don't be afraid of the mess. Roll up your sleeves and enjoy some messy play time with your baby. What looks like a mess on the surface is a truly fantastic learning experience for your baby.

When organising sensory play for babies it is important to consider what sort of materials you offer. Babies can like or dislike the feel of a material or substance so if your baby is upset try again another day.



Water is always a favourite and bath times offer an ideal time for babies to explore water, so leave time to play as well as wash.

It is important to make the materials accessible to babies therefore we suggest you either set up on the ground (perhaps on a tarp or picnic rug) or in a highchair. Remember to always supervise your child.

For young babies we suggest you use safe materials that can be put in the mouth, as babies use their mouths to explore as well as their hands.



Possible Sensory Play Ideas

- Tray of water
- Tray of rice
- Tray of cornflour slime
- Tray of cooked spaghetti
- Tray of cooked rice noodles

As your baby gets older you may like to add some food colouring to the substances or use jelly instead of gelatine. You could also introduce playdough.

