

## Tactile play activity ideas

### Dinosaur Swamp



Sit alongside your child, explore and feed your senses. What does it feel like? What can you find? What can you smell? Use simple everyday descriptive language and enjoy this fun sensory experience together.

**Required resources:** Tray or a washing up bowl and dinosaurs.

**To make the gloop** - Add one cup of cold water to two cups of cornflour, mix together until the cornflour absorbs all the water and add a few drops of Green food colouring.

### Tactile Board



You will already have lots of resources at home that you could use to make a fun board to explore different feels, so don't stress about buying anything. Sit with your child using simple language about what you can feel. What a lovely way to stimulate your senses and enjoy being together.

**Required resources:** Look around the home for items such as: buttons, tin foil, cut off carpet tile, any creative materials, old textured fabrics. Glue or double-sided sticky tape and a big piece of cardboard.

### Jelly Play



A quick, easy and cheap sensory activity. Depending on the comprehension and development stage of your child, you could differ how you use it. Explore using hands, feet and mouth, modelling descriptive language around what you feel and taste. Could you put your pincer grip to the test and use chop sticks to find hidden objects in the jelly? Can your child name the hidden objects when found, or can they follow your instructions to find specific ones?

**Required resources:** Jelly cubes/sachet. Tray or an old shower curtain, spoons or play chop sticks.

**To make the Jelly:** Add cubes or sachet to ½ pint of boiling water and stir until the jelly cubes/grains have dissolved then add ½ pint of cold water. When the jelly has fully cooled, place in the fridge to set overnight.

### Rainbow rice



Such a fun activity to engage attention. Can your child recognise and name the colours? Sit alongside your child and name them repeatedly to build up memory. Can you use sticks to mark make, and encourage those pre-writing skills?

**Required resources:** Uncooked rice, water and food colouring of choice.

**To make the Rainbow Rice:** pour uncooked rice into separate food bags, add ½ tsp of water and 10-15 drops of chosen food colouring, repeat this with as many colours as you would like. Mix by rubbing the food bags in between your hands, then pour rice onto a baking sheet to dry. Drying takes approx. an hour, then pour all colours into a tray and have fun.

### Shaving foam



Another fun way to mark make and practice those pre-writing skills. It's great to use transport and model making the vehicle sounds. Enjoy getting messy 😊!

**Required resources:** Tray/shower curtain/washing up bowl, shaving foam, play cars or sticks to mark make and paint or food colouring.

### What's in the box?



Put several everyday items in the box and take turns to take an item out. Model using simple descriptive language i.e. it is soft, it is small, it's a sock, put it on your foot. Great for turn taking and recognising everyday objects and what they are used for.

**Required resources:** an old box or basket, everyday items from around your home e.g. spoon, toothbrush, sock, orange, sponge, hairbrush, pasta, shoe, glasses any items you would like. You could even have a theme such as toy vehicles.

## Spaghetti Post



A fun way to put those fine motor skills to the test. Sit next to your child and model what to do. Practise your numbers by counting as you post.

**Required resources:** Colander, dry spaghetti.

## Colourful scented spaghetti play



Cook up some spaghetti, you can add food colouring and different smells? Put on a big tray and enjoy exploring your sense of smell, taste and touch with this fun and easy activity. Remember to model simple descriptive language throughout. It may even encourage your child to try new foods!

**Required resources:** Cooked spaghetti, food colouring, food bags. Tray or old shower curtain.

**To make the colourful scented spaghetti:** you will need to cook some spaghetti and allow the spaghetti to cool. Once cooled, divide the spaghetti into separate food bags and add a few drops of food colouring in each bag; mix the bags in your hands and then pour out on to a suitable area to dry. After an hour it will be ready to pour on a tray or shower curtain to play.

## Cornflour explore



Stimulate your sense of touch by simply mixing cornflour and water for a fun gloppy feel. Watching the visual change when you squeeze the set cornflour in your warm hands is fun; whilst it will stimulate your senses, it can also be a calming activity. (Adults you may even want to get this back out when the kids are in bed 😊).

**Required resources:** Cornflour, water and a tray/ washing up bowl. Add water to the cornflour and watch it set; this will be ready to play with right away!

## Sensory Steps



Can you make some fun boxes of different materials for your child to use their feet to explore different textures? Whip your socks off and join in and have fun together.

**Required resources:** Boxes or trays, different resources such as: beads, sticks, cotton wool, jelly etc.

**To make this task:** fill empty boxes/trays with different textured resources, take off your shoes and socks and explore.

## Social communication games

Here are a few simple play ideas to try at home, all these activities promote sharing attention, turn taking and exposure to everyday language. Playing these activities will support playing alongside, recognition of others and enjoying being together without pressure. Turn taking games can build resilience which is an important life skill.

### Egg emotions match



Take turns lifting off an egg and depending on your child's level of understanding, there are several ways you can play. For example- Can you mimic the faces? Can you recognise and name the emotion? Can you name an action that would give you that feeling? You could play a memory game and try to match two pictures, again this will depend on your child's current level of understanding. Your child may even just want to pick up the eggs and explore. The main goal is to enjoy the activity together!

**Required resources:** White board, or paper and plastic play eggs. You can cut out circles from paper if you don't have eggs.

**To make this:** Draw emotions on to a white board or piece of paper and place egg shapes or cut out paper over the pictures.

### Simple games

A simple chase game, musical statues, musical chairs, peek-a-boo, rolling a ball to each other, batting a balloon and 'Simon Says' games are good for our SEND children, they are very predictable are easy to understand the rules therefore keep anxiety levels lower and enjoyment levels higher.

### Playing Lego/construction



Can help develop your child's vocabulary. This can focus on maths, colours and shape recognition, this is a good joint attention activity with a shared purpose outcome. Lots of opportunity for creativity.

**Required resources:** Lego or blocks



## Sensory tips

Here is a list of some sensory resources you can have fun making with your child-

- CD's hanging from string
- Fairy lights in a tent
- Glow in the dark sticks
- Homemade sound shakers (dried pasta/rice in a bottle)
- Fairy light box (Put fairy lights into a clear plastic box with a lid)
- Homemade lava lamps (Fill a bottle  $\frac{3}{4}$  with vegetable oil, then  $\frac{1}{4}$  water. Add a few drops of food colouring, if you have an Alka-seltzer tablet break it into small pieces and drop in one at a time).

Dancing is a perfect way to be silly and have fun together. It can also feed into your little one's sensory system and help enable them to focus more.

Look up '*Shake your sillies out*' and '*It's warm up time*' on an internet search engine.

It's always good to offer movement before wanting/expecting your child to focus, remember if we want something 'out' we must put something 'in' first!

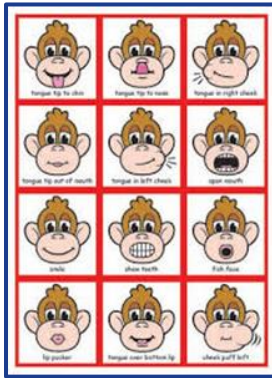
**Here is a list of things of movement exercises-**

- Star jumps
- Pushing/carrying items
- Rolling
- Mixing
- Pulling
- Deep pressure massage – (Firm body massage, your child will show you if they are comfortable with this!)
- Stretching
- Crawling

## Oral motor exercises

Here are some simple oral motor exercises for you to practise at home with your child, they will support muscle memory and can work towards supporting the development of Speech and Language.

### Monkey faces



Put your oral muscles to the test and have fun mimicking the faces together. Can you play monkey face bingo?

**Required resources:** This can be printed off online, equally you can use a white board or piece of paper and draw your own funny monkey faces.

### Colour blow



What a fun way to work your oral motor skills, you can enjoy blowing them into the pots, or you can challenge your little one by calling out colours and seeing if they can recognise them.

**Required resources:** Colourful pots, Pom poms and straws

### Pom-pom race track



This is fun and visual game where you can work your oral muscles, proximity of space, and resilience. Model blowing your Pom-Pom, siblings can play this alongside each other and create a healthy competition?

**Required resources:** Pom poms, straws and masking tape

### Search the story 'Mr Tongue' on the internet - it's a fun story for all to join in and work their oral motor muscles!

Alongside this for many of our parents with Pre-Verbal children that are finding it hugely difficult to interact, you may already be aware of intensive interaction.

Intensive interaction is a fabulous insight to the positive intervention style we promote for lots of the children we support in Reading. You can also search Intensive Interaction on the internet and find lots of information and watch some beautiful and insightful videos.

We hope you find this useful and more importantly, we hope you have fun! Please do share your thoughts and feedback with us as we would love to hear from you!

**Sam Smith & Angela Smith**

Early Years Service