



Daily Sensory Activities and Messy Play Ideas at Home

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What are daily sensory activities and messy play?

- A sensory activity is a great way to energise and calm children so that they are ready to learn for the day ahead, or just to stay calm and focused, between or after school work.

- Sensory or Messy play is the exploration of the world through any of the 5 senses: touch; smell; sight; hearing and taste. It doesn't require expensive toys but can be enjoyed using what can be found around the house, while out and about, or with items that can be easily and inexpensively made.

So how does a sensory session work?

- ♦ For some children the best time to do a sensory session may be first thing in the morning **before** any work/school activity and if possible after a lunch break, **BUT** some autistic children may need more movement breaks throughout the day, so you can use an individual activity for this.
- ♦ The session should be active, fun and physical so that the children and you can enjoy it.
- ♦ A sensory circuit could last anything up to 15 minutes, However start with a few minutes at first and work up to 15 minutes, Remember its meant to be fun!
- ♦ Give a specific number to do for each activity e.g. 10 star jumps or run up and down stairs for 2 minutes (use a timer!)

Complete at least one activity from each section – in the following order:-

- ♦ 1. **ALERTING** – Wake up
- ♦ 2. **ORGANISATIONAL** - Concentrate
- ♦ 3. **CALMING** - Relax.

1. 10 Star Jumps



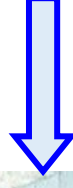
2. 10 bounces on the space hopper



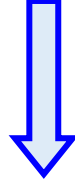
3. Commando crawls from one end of the room to the other



4. Walk along the straight line and back again 5 times



5. 10 Push-Ups against the wall



6. Massage with exercise ball for 5 minutes

Alerting -The aim of the activities in this section is to move about and

Wake –up!

- ♦ Bouncing whilst sitting on an exercise ball, space hopper or use a trampette. Work up to playing catch whilst still bouncing.
- ♦ Hula Hooping or spinning a hoop on arms.
- ♦ Jogging on the spot or inside a hoop, change speed or jog around the room or garden
- ♦ Star jumps, work up to turning round or counting whilst jumping.
- ♦ Jack jumps - jump from a crouched position with arms and legs to the side then return to a crouched position, try to combine it with jogging to make it a bit harder!
- ♦ Hopscotch
- ♦ Dancing
- ♦ Running up and down the stairs
- ♦ If your lucky to have a trampoline use it to bounce, star jumps etc



Organising - The aim of the activities in this section is to concentrate on challenges

- ♦ Balancing on a beam or Walking on a straight line (eg coloured tape on the floor or even a dressing gown belt)
- ♦ Throwing bean bags or crunched up paper into a target (hoop, bin, box)
- ♦ Log rolling
- ♦ Commando crawls (under a sheet or blanket, through a tunnel or from one end of the room to the other)
- ♦ Simon Says Sequences (hop, clap, jump adult lead, child to follow)
- ♦ Blowing bubbles or blowing paper balls
- ♦ Rolling over an exercise ball using hands to walk back and forward.
- ♦ Stepping stones
- ♦ Throwing a ball to each other



Calming - The aim of the activities in this section is to provide deep pressure to the body and Relax

- ♦ Press-ups (against a wall or on the floor on all fours)
- ♦ Push or pull heavy objects around (use a toy trolley or a washing basket with heavy items in)
- ♦ Planking
- ♦ Ball squash (lying on tummy, whilst you roll the exercise ball up and down them)
- ♦ Massage (hands, back, feet, shoulders)
- ♦ Breathing Techniques
- ♦ Hot Dogs (rolling your child up in a blanket)
- ♦ Lying under a weighted blanket and use the breathing techniques and /or massage



**Go on a sensory walk.
Find something:**

- Bumpy
- Brown
- Flying
- Round
- Yellow
- Loud
- Quiet
- To jump on
- To climb
- To run to
- Red
- Green
- Smooth

**Find a grassy area. Now
do these tasks:**

- Touch one tree. Run and touch another
- Jump up high 10x
- Skip and sing a song
- Climb one tree or other item
- Play leap frog

**Go outside for some
messy play! Do these
tasks:**

- Make "Sensory Soup"
- Make art with flower petals, grass clippings, sticks, & leaves
- Create a Mud Kitchen
- Play with wet chalk

**Go outside and get
ready to move! Do these
tasks:**

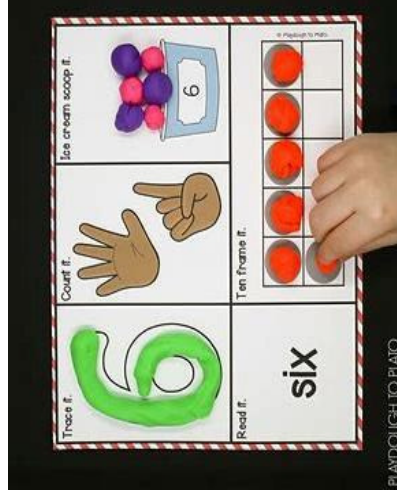
- Roll down a hill
- Blow bubbles
- Make an obstacle course
- Do tumbles or cartwheels
- Do animal walks

**Find an area with rocks
or pebbles. Now do
these tasks:**

- Stack a rock tower
- Build a pebble house
- Collect 10 rocks
- Play "I Spy" with rocks
- Play tic-tac-toe with pebbles

**Go to a playground. Do
these tasks:**

- Climb up the slide
- Push a friend on the swings
- Do a timed race on the equipment
- Pretend the playground is an island or ship



Play Dough, putty or scented dough,

- ♦ Make up a large batch of playdough and divide it into separate bowls.
- ♦ Mix different ingredients into each bowl, to create easily identifiable smells, such as lemon essence (you could also add food colouring).
- ♦ texture them by adding sand and glitter.
- ♦ While the children play with the dough, they can enjoy the different smells/textures and try to guess what they are.
- ♦ Activities can be endless,
- ♦ Counting with buttons
- ♦ matching colours with buttons or teddies
- ♦ Making shapes
- ♦ Making cakes, dinosaurs, monsters
- ♦ Use plastic cutlery to mark make
- ♦ Printable playdough mats can be found on Twinkl if you laminate them you can use again.
- ♦ <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/playdough-recipe>

Painting

- **Hand, foot and finger painting**
- getting your kids to do hand prints and footprints, you can also get them to do finger painting as an alternative to paintbrushes.
- **Welly painting**
- use a long piece of paper (you can just tape some together or an old roll of wallpaper and a tray of paint, put on wellies and jump in the paint then walk or run up and down the paper.
- **Vegetable Prints**
- use vegetables cut in half to print with, and make patterns
- **Mess free painting**
- Take a small piece of card that will fit in a plastic sandwich bag. Squeeze some blobs of paint onto it. Then carefully place it inside the bag (trying not to squash the paint blobs).
- Now use Sellotape or parcel tape to seal all four edges of the sandwich bag. Give it to your child and they can squash the blobs of paint and use their hands to move the paint around.



Water play. Use bubbles in a bowl or bucket, use a large paintbrush and paint walls/fences etc with the soapy water.

Spray bottle to spray windows/plants/floor

Puddles either a muddy puddle on a walk or one you've made, add a bit of powder paint for extra stimulation.

Make a “car wash” use plastic vehicles with a range of utensils to scrub the cars.

Use food colouring to change the colour of the water, have plenty of different size/ shaped containers to pour water in and out of.

Bubbles to blow/catch/pop etc.



Gardening – get your child to help you in the garden, planting seeds in pots or planting flowers. Strawberries and sunflowers are good ones where you should get results quickly. But for those that can't wait cress and herbs will grow very quickly.



Digging – Some children benefit from doing heavy work as they have tons of energy to use up. Digging and moving soil in a wheelbarrow is a good game.



Construction site Use compost to set out a with diggers, trucks and cranes.

Mud kitchens are a great way to "bake" mud pies and explore textures.

Shaving foam

Some people use shaving foam, but mouldable soap foam is just as good. You can simply get some foam between your hands and clap over your child to create a snow effect then let them stamp on it.



Ice cream splat – get an ice cream cone and fill it with the foam, let your kids then splat the ‘ice cream’ onto a tray. It is over quickly but a good attention and interactive game.

Snow scenes– draw snow men in the snow or if you have some Christmas themed toys you can make a Christmas scene



Papier-Mache

Strips of paper

OPTION 1:

3/4 white glue (PVA)

1/4 water

OPTION 2:

1 part flour

1 part water. Stir together

Cornflower Gloop

2 cups of cornflower

1 cup of water

Food colouring optional

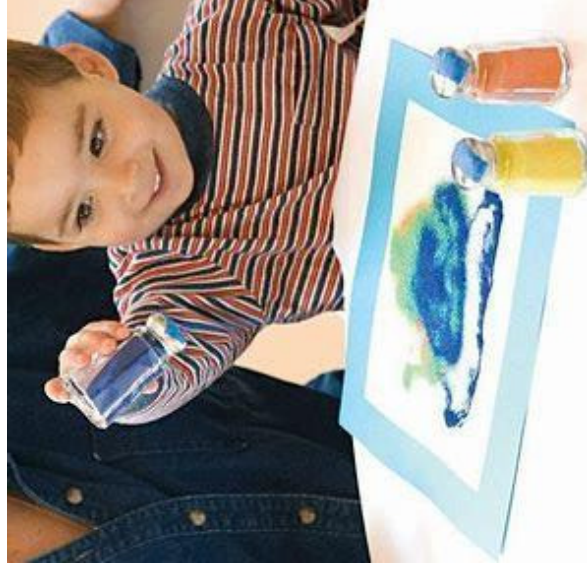
Mix in a large bowl

Play!



Sand-Use a sand pit or a large tray for various activities, **Sandcastles, Treasure hunts** (burying toys and get them to dig them up in the sand), car tracks, construction sites, mark making, use a variety of buckets and spades/containers

Coloured sand is useful for arts and crafts making tactile cards pictures etc.



Useful Websites

<https://www.seftondirectory.com/autism>

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/resources/active-roleplay-lesson-starters>

<https://www.seftondirectory.com/kb5/sefton/directory/advice.page>

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/sensory-differences>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zh9v382>

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/>

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/>