

## Sensory Play Ideas

*Sensory play has many benefits for children. It helps to develop fine and motor skills whilst enabling cognitive growth-making connections. It enables children to develop language skills and have an awareness of themselves. Sensory play is calming and soothing and often used to reduce anxiety. Below are a few sensory play ideas to engage children.*



**Frozen Eggs-** Add a dinosaur/farm animal etc. to a water filled balloon. Add food colouring and glitter. Tie the balloon and freeze. Children will love to explore these eggs and find a variety of ways to free the object.

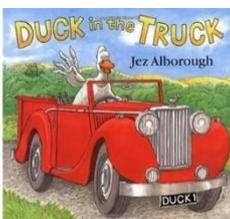
**Sensory Balloons-** Balloons can be filled with a variety of items such as sand, rice, marbles, play dough etc. Tie the balloons and the children have a range of sensory balls to explore.

**Bubble Bin-** Use warm water mixed with baby shampoo. Add some colouring, glitter pouring containers and whisks. The children will love to froth the bubbles with the whisk and pour between containers.



**Digging for Worms-** Fill a tray with mud and cooked spaghetti. Mix the two together. Give the children a jar each and tweezers. This can be developed into a game to support numeracy.

**Bubble Wrap-** Tape bubble wrap to a floor or table. Squirt shaving foam and a few squirts of paint on top. Let the children explore the mixture using their hands or feet. When explored add paper to the top to print their creation.



**Stuck in the Mud-** An adaptation from the book 'Duck in the truck'. Bring the story to life using corn-starch, cocoa powder, and water and add some farm animals and a red truck.

**Cloud Dough-** Mix together 1 cup of oil, 8 cups of all-purpose flour and add some oil based food colouring. This dough feels like clouds and children will love to squeeze and poke the dough.



**Fizzy Cloud Dough-** Mix together 1 cup of oil, 4 cups of all-purpose flour, 4 cups of baking powder and some oil based food colouring. Give children pipettes with vinegar in to drop on to the dough. The vinegar and bicarbonate will interact and cause the dough to fizz. This is a great sensory activity to do with children to explore emotions. It helps to visualise how lots of small things can come together to make a big reaction!

**Sensory Tray-** Colour some rice and pasta. Add in some sequins, beads, buttons, pom poms and pipe cleaners. Children can explore the textures and may sort the items or thread the beads.



**I-Spy Bottles-** These are great as calming activities as they give the child a distraction to what they are feeling. Fill a bottle with coloured rice but add in some objects for the children to look for. Cards could be added and laminated for children to identify which they have found. You can develop these bottles to support phonics by having all objects in a bottle with the same initial sound, i.e. boat, button, bag etc.