

BABY BYTES

For families with infants and young children

Messy Play

Want an inexpensive, educational activity for your kids? Sensory play utilizes all 5 senses, but the sense of touch is often the most frequent - and fun - focus of messy play. Experimenting with different textures encourages self-expression and creativity and can be a calming activity for many children. Water, sand, play dough and paint are some of the appealing choices and can be adapted to 'edible' varieties for younger children.



DID YOU KNOW???

- 'Squish' 'plop' 'squeeze'...Messy play introduces new vocabulary and concepts to children. When they play with cups in a basin of water they begin to understand the meaning of 'full' and 'empty', 'more' and 'less'. They discover that they can change a ball of play dough into a long snake.....or add some sticks and make it into a birthday cake.
- Messy play encourages individual self-expression and isn't about a finished product. Try putting some pudding on your toddler's high chair tray and let the finger painting begin!
- Messy play encourages fine-motor skills and coordination. When children pull, squish or pat the materials they are developing the muscles of their hands and arms.



MAKE THE MOST OUT OF MESSY PLAY TIME

Be aware of allergies and sensitive skin types.

- If your child is hesitant do not rush them. Encourage them by playing yourself or ask a sibling to join in.
- A 'tool' such as a popsicle stick, spoons, tongs or a car can be used to encourage play.
- Try adding rollers, cookie cutters, pine cones, pipe cleaners...the sky's the limit!
- Extend the life of play dough by storing in an air tight container.
- If fear of mess is holding you back, a little preparing ahead of time will make the clean-up task go smoothly. Having a wet face cloth ready, using a full smock on your child and using a high chair will help.

"Creative play is like a spring that bubbles up from deep within a child."

~ Joan Almon, Contemporary American educator



SUGGESTIONS FOR ENCOURAGING MESSY PLAY EXPERIENCES

<p>SNOW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ingredients Ivory Snow (laundry soap powder) and water • Place Ivory Snow in a mixing bowl and begin to gradually add a little water—stir with electric mixer for several minutes until mixture resembles soft flaky snow • Use for finger painting, brush painting or spatial painting 	<p>PLAY DOUGH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix together 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of salt, 1 tbsp of cream of tartar and 2 tbsp of vegetable oil • Add 2 cups of boiling water coloured with food colouring, mix with a spoon • Knead until smooth • Shape into different balls, rolls or push into small cups 	<p>MAGIC MUD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put up to one box of corn starch in a bowl and add enough coloured water to be able to stir it • The more water added the thinner the mud will be • You may explore it in a zip lock bag or on a smooth surface
<p>CORNMEAL PLAYDOUGH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups flour, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cornmeal, 1 cup salt, 1 cup water • Mix all ingredients together • Add more water to make the mixture cling • This dough will keep up to 6 weeks in an airtight container 	<p>SHAVING CREAM PAINT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is easy if done on mirrors or in the tub • Add a little paint powder, food colouring or oatmeal for texture • Use non-menthol cream or foam soap 	<p>FINGER PAINT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of boiling water with a paste made of $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of corn starch and a little cold water, mix slowly, stirring constantly • Boil 1 minute and add a few drops of food colouring • Cool and have a paint party