

# Play in May - week one



# Play in May

Play in May is our theme for our brand new month. Each week we'll be sending you a printable with 5 different activities that you can try with our little one. We'll give you information on why it is beneficial for your baby's brain & their sensory development too.

Play at home has always been important and it can be difficult to know how to play with your baby to benefit their development. As the world begins to open up again, we really want to give you opportunities to play during your week, it helps add structure, is incredible for helping your little one develop brain connections, adds structure during this unusual time and can help bring us all together.

This pack is full of play suggestions, ideas on activities you can do with your little one, repeat them, choose your favourites, miss a day, work around your family, there is no strict way to play and nobody is ever behind.

Please post photos in our facebook group. We would LOVE to see what you get up to.



# Play in May

**Safety first** - These activities are suggestions of how to engage your baby in play. They need to be carried out with adult supervision and you taking full responsibility for your baby during play. Please ensure that your little one is supervised with the toy at all times. Keep your little one in arms reach and eye sight when they are playing.



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# 3 texture colour match



this is a really quick idea which is a great activity to repeat often with your little one.

Take 3 toys that colour match and are maybe different textures or we hold and touch differently and do some simple toy rotation with them. First give them the smallest toy, explain to them what they are looking at, let them hold and touch, using one hand and both hands working together. Let them really interact without lots of distractions for a minute or two. Then move onto the largest of the toys, have fun with a plush toy, read a book together, let them feel and touch a different texture so they are having to think about their fine motor skills while looking at something different and feeling a new texture, again do this for a minute or two. Then give them the last toy in the same way for a minute or two. This really helps with concentration, doing a toy rotation in this way. Your final activity is to get your little one in a different position and let them engage with all the toys, so pop your little one in tummy time, side lying, on their back.

# 3 texture colour match



For our older ones we can move the toys around to encourage moving or put it on a surface so they are supported on their feet and let them engage with all of the toys for a minute or two.

This 8 - 10 minute play pattern helps your little one's fine motor skills, gross motor skills, co-ordination, balance, concentration, awareness of two sides of their body, hand-eye co-ordination, their ability to process textures, visual skills, listening skills. You'll find that your little one's ability to engage with the three toys varies depending on their level of alertness and concentration skills but you'll also notice their ability to engage with the three toys increases the more you practice, repetition is amazing for baby brain development. Initially use the same toys a couple of times and then vary the toys.

Practice this pattern often, it is really amazing for little baby brains and their sensory skills.

# No mess painting



No mess painting is an amazing way to increase the textures into play without the risk of paint going near a mouth. It is an amazing tummy time activity and great for taping down to high chair tables to give our sitting babies an opportunity to explore too. There are a couple of printable spring signs included in this printable that you can print on paper or cardboard (use very little paint if it is on paper) If you don't have access to a printer, you can just use paint or draw your own design.



# No mess painting

Pop your printed design in a ziplock bag and squeeze small amount of paint onto the design. Secure the bag and tape down if necessary to ensure that the paint stays securely away from your baby. Ikea bags are amazing as they have double seals and they are a bit thicker if you have them to hand.

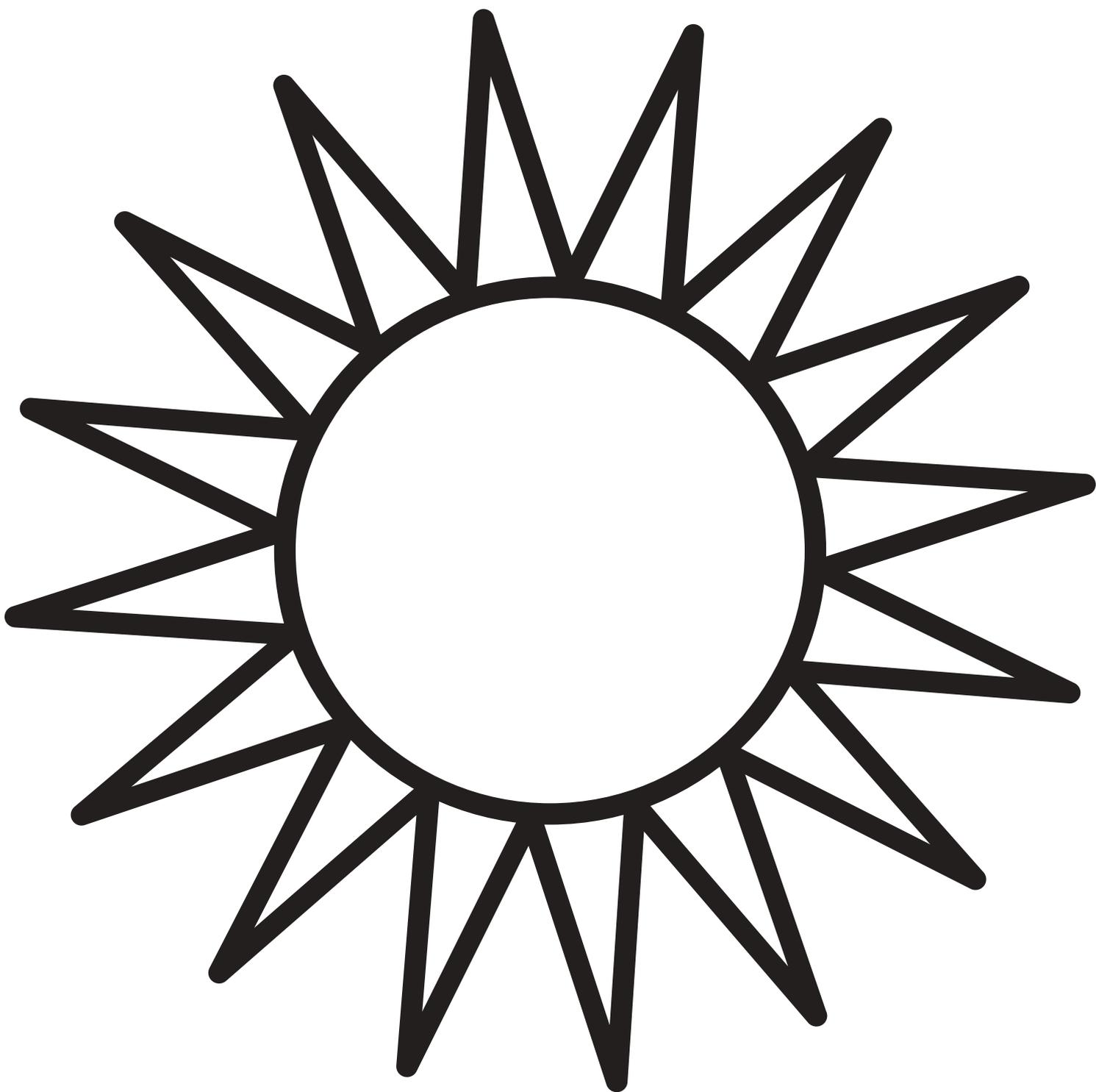
Pop the bag down on a safe surface and encourage your little one to hold, touch and move the paint around, let them explore the different texture in their hands. For our youngest ones tummy time is an amazing way to do this and for our older ones sitting to paint, tummy time or taping the bag to their high chair works well.

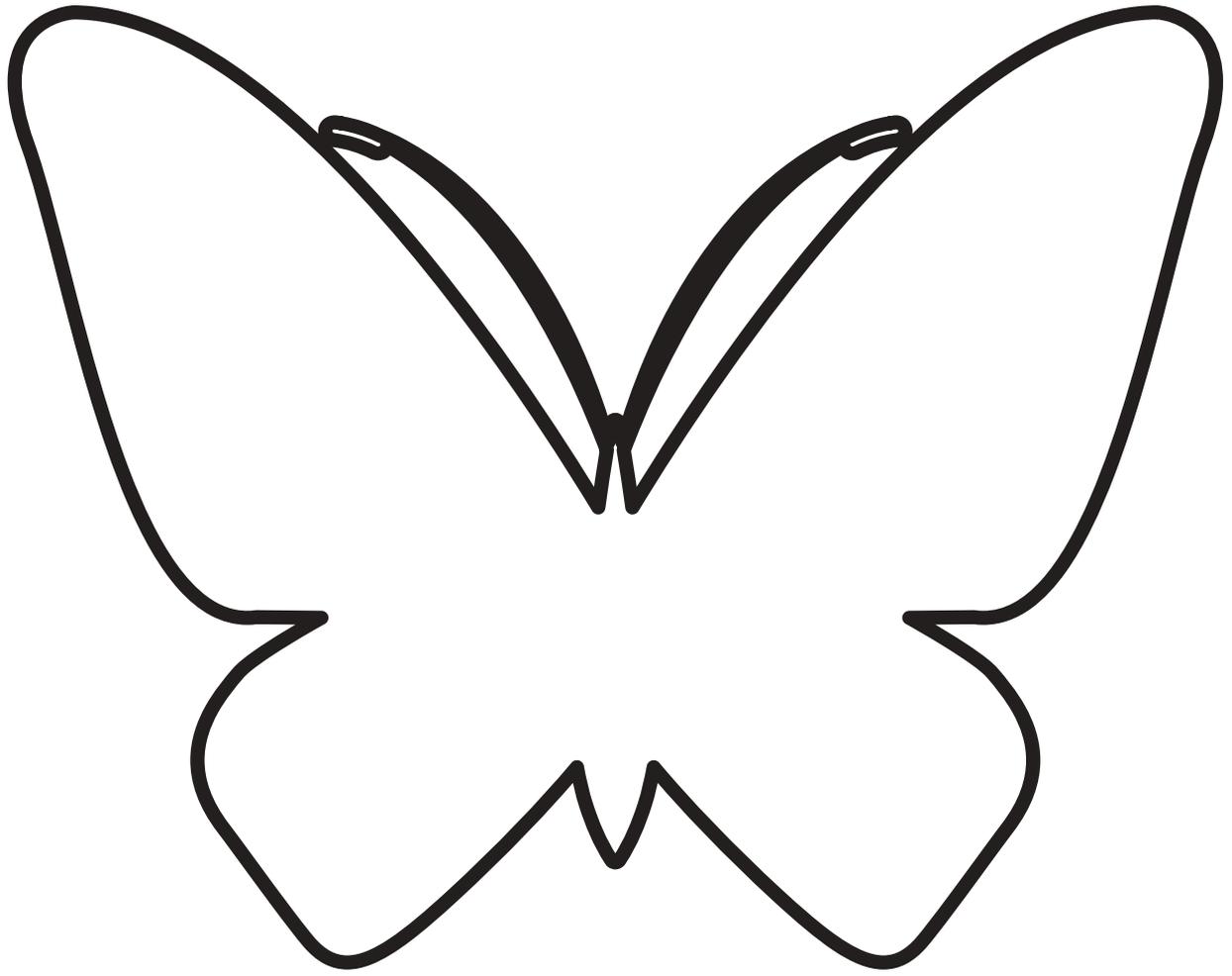
Once the design is covered in paint, carefully cut the bag down the sides and remove the painting, pop it on some paper and leave out to dry. Baby's first piece of artwork!

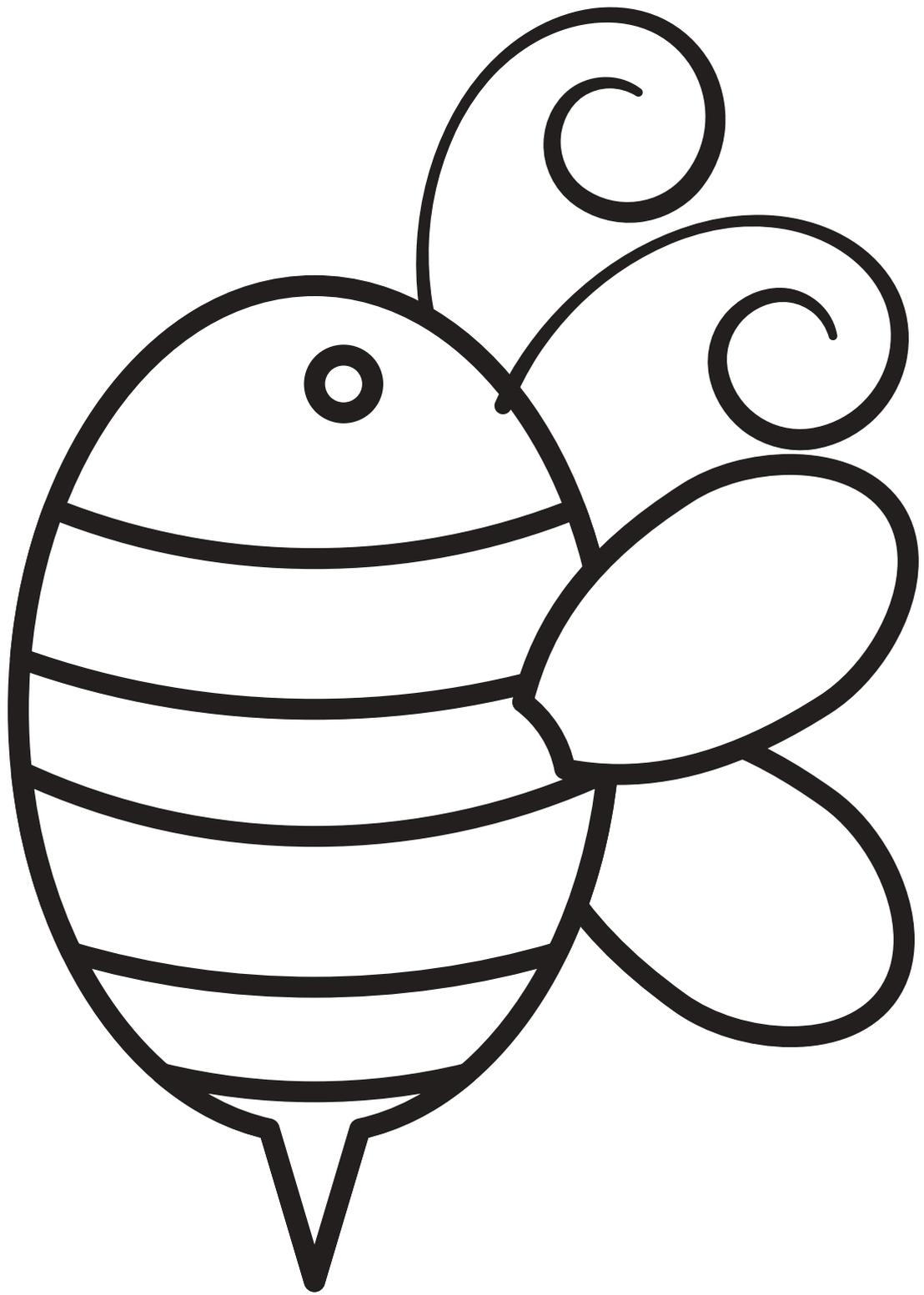
For our older babies and our toddlers, you can make it a messier activity by finger painting, hand painting and using brushes or cotton pads to transfer the paint (amazing for introducing extra textures)

It is a great activity to get siblings involved with too!









# rainbow sensory bottles



Take a water bottle, empty spice jar or container and fill it with some rainbow inspired things from your home. Recent bottles in our home have contained beads, lentils, coloured paper, tissue paper and rice. Try and make your bottles colourful and engaging for your baby to look at visually while the interact with holding and touching the bottle.

Our youngest ones will enjoy watching the movement in the bottle and can be supported to hold and touch. Our babies in sitting can be encouraged to do some two handed holding while our older babies can engage with the bottle in one hand. Encourage shaking, rolling and tracking of the bottle. This is a whole brain activity as it helps our motor skills, sensory development, visual skills, balance and co-ordination, memory, auditory processing and our ability to use both sides of our body together

# red themed soft spaces



We've been doing a lot of single colour play in both our community group and members club over the past few weeks and they are amazing for our baby's visual development. Red is one of the first colours that our baby's see in focus so we are focusing on it for our first soft play space.

We are creating a soft space for our baby's to engage with by popping down a duvet and covering it in a blanket, towel or fabric. You can either just pop the duvet down flat or fold it into two before covering in fabric, you are trying not to have a very 'deep' space that your little one has difficulties moving around in. Pop a contrasting fabric down and then arrange your red toys or textures. If you have access to red fabrics it is amazing for our baby's visual skills picking the same toy off the same coloured background. They have to start to work out what is in the foreground and what is in the background as they engage with the toys.

# red themed soft spaces

Adding the duvet into the space means that our babies have to engage their balance more, it is a bit more of a challenge for their motor skills especially in sitting balance, tummy time and rolling and a really comfy area for our lying babies to play in. For our recent sitters be right behind them as the unstable surface of the duvet challenge them when they are staying upright.

Please pop the duvet on a padded or carpeted surface on your floor rather than on a bed or sofa surface, so they are not having to negotiate the unsteady surface of a bed or sofa as well as the duvet



# peek a boo



Peek a boo is one of our favourite games and we play it often with our babies in class. It has so many benefits for our babies including their hand-eye co-ordination, developing their gross motor skills, their fine motor skills, ocular motor control, concentration, balance, turn taking, feeling different fabrics, communication skills, auditory processing and their proprioception (knowing where their bodies are in space)

Peek a boo is a really easy activity to grade for your babies and played often you will really see an increase in their skills. We use chiffon scarves in classes because you can see through them but you can use any muslin cloth, face cloth or fabric while always supervising your baby.

# peek a boo

stage one - for our lying babies you do all of the lifting and lowering of the scarf, make eye contact with your baby about 6 - 8 inches away, use their name, have big smiles and make it a really fun time with your baby.

stage two - for our sitting babies pop the chiffon over their head and encourage them to remove it, lots of praise as they use their hand-eye co-ordination and motor skills to manipulate the scarf. Be aware that our new sitters might lean back as they pull the scarf away so be there to support them

stage three - put the scarf over your head and encourage your sitting baby to stretch towards you to remove the scarf. This is amazing for their co-ordination, balance, motor skills and visual skills

Stage four - encourage your baby to lift and lower the scarf and engage you in the game. This is an amazing stage as your baby is now inviting you to play and looking for a happy response from you.

Do it often, repetition is amazing for brain development and it is such a simple activity to engage your baby

