

Play in May - week three



Play in May

Welcome along to week 3 of our Play in May themed printables.

Each week we'll be sending you a printable with at least 5 different activities that you can try with your little one at home. We'll give you information on why it is beneficial for your baby's brain & their sensory development too.

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 to your day 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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fine motor skills play session

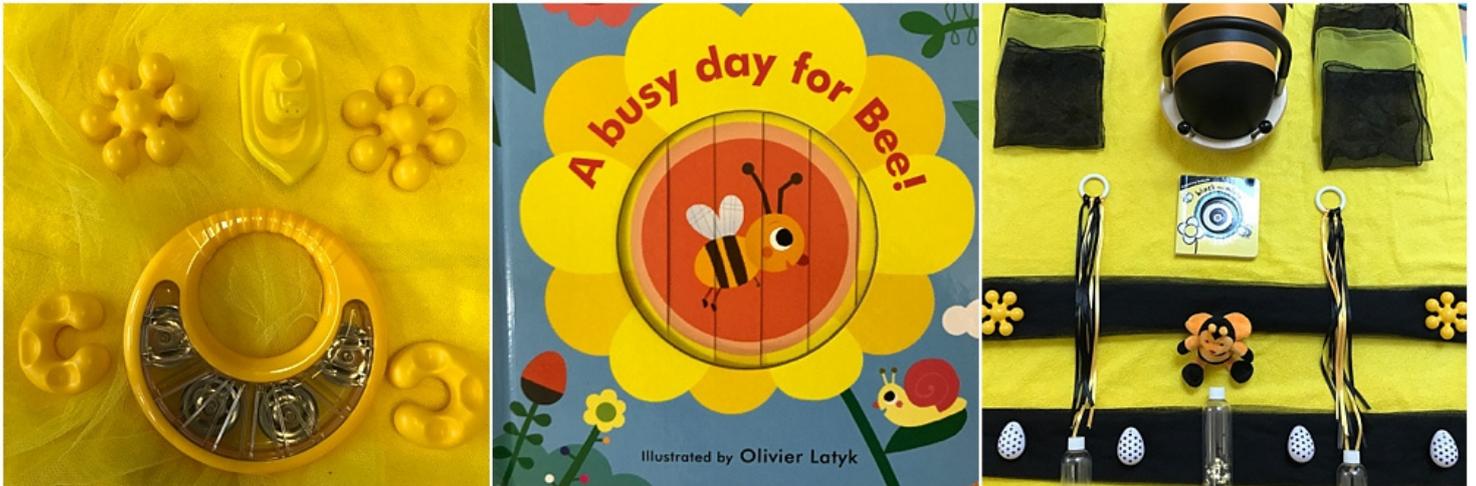


It is really important that our little one's learn how to manipulate lots of different objects, it helps their fine finger control and their ability to develop different grips like palmer grasp (where they use their whole hand) and pincer grip (where they hold smaller items between a finger and their thumb).

This week we'd love you to choose 4 or 5 toys that are different textures and that your little one would hold differently and arrange an exploratory play session to help their fine finger control. You might choose a plush toy, a link, starlink, a music toy, a book, a block or a ball.

For our smallest babies open little hands up and let them feel around corners, lie them on their side so both hands come together to play. For our sitters pop the toy in front of them so they can use both hands to manipulate bigger objects and single hands for smaller items, make sure they get an opportunity to use both hands.

bumble bee area



We are adding yellow into our contrast play area this week, it is one of the first colours our little one's see in focus and it is amazing to give them an opportunity to give the a play space that helps their visual development.

Have a hunt for some single colour yellow toys and place them on the same background or a contrast background. In our playspace we've added a book about bees, yellow toys, a wheelie bug for movement and some black net and chiffons as our contrast fabrics. We've made some ribbon toys with some black and yellow ribbons and a sensory bottle with some black and gold sequins.

Have a hunt to see if you have any contrast available at home, digging out some dark clothing, black kitchen utensils, a rubber duck from the bathroom and some yellow links would be an amazing start.

You'll notice your little one really focusing on the play area as they are able to see it in focus.

mark making



Last week we shared our favourite play dough recipe and it has been amazing to see so many of you using it. This week dig the dough out of the fridge and use it for some mark making. It is a great way to help fine finger control and helping our little ones understand cause and effect.

Using fingers, hands, feet, bricks and toys are an amazing way to mark the dough. Great for developing finger isolation, hand to eye co-ordination, hand strength, fine finger control, using single colour toys is amazing for visual development too.

This is a great activity to do with siblings as older siblings can really encourage younger ones to attend to the task and help their co-ordination.

cloud dough



Cloud dough is an easy to make messy play activity. It is a dry activity which is great to add more texture into play and this recipe smells amazing!

We love cloud dough at our sessions, it is very tactile, mouldable and our little ones love to squeeze it between their fingers. It is a fine dough which when pressed mounds into lumps and when dropped dissolves back into a flour texture, it is the ultimate messy play station! Couple your cloud dough with colourful toys, to provide a visual contrast and interest for the little ones. All the ingredients are safe to taste, although we wouldn't recommend that they eat a lot of it, and your little one should be constantly supervised while undertaking messy play.

This activity is for our older babies who are successfully weaning and it is a great activity for playing on a high chair table or in a tuff tray.

cloud dough

To make the cloud dough

8 cups of flour

1 cup of coconut oil (this makes the dough smell amazing)

This makes a box of cloud dough as seen in the pictures, half to make a smaller portion for table top or high chair use.

We make ours in a kenwood mixer but you could also do it by hand, pour the flour into the bowl and gradually add the coconut oil to it making sure that all of the flour gets coated and that the oil doesn't form a big ball in the flour, just keep mixing until the dough is fine and when you squeeze it together it forms a ball in your hand. We refrigerate the dough before use and use it the next day with our babies but you can keep it in an airtight box for up to a week. You can also use brown wholemeal flour to make the dough look like sand!

Our babies learn – creativity, how to explore and discover, different textures, cause and effect and motor skills.

Body systems involved – proprioception body awareness, tactile discrimination, motor skills (both gross and fine motor control), self regulation, visual, olfactory, gustatory perception if the baby tastes the dough and auditory when listening to parents and the noise of the toys against the tray.



spider sensory basket



Creating a spider's web in a box, basket or container is a great way to engage your baby's motor planning skills. We've looped thick red ribbon around a white basket to create a contrast that our little one could see in focus. Adding a few crosses of ribbon makes the activity easier while looping lots of ribbon creates a more complex pattern and it is a great idea to start easier and increase the ribbon over time.

Pop some small toys in the basket and encourage your little one to move the toys round to get them out of the basket. You can use different textures and increase the toy size as they get more practice. This is amazing for their hand to eye co-ordination and motor planning skills. This activity can be done from tummy time by popping the basket on it's side, sitting and popping on a sofa or chair surface to encourage standing. Practice often, repetition is amazing for brain and motor skills development!

rainbow ball pool



We use ball pools a lot with our babies in the groups that we run and today we have some top tips to share with you about how to use them with your baby.

Essentially there are a couple of types of ball pools, pop up ones like the moon and star one and jungle ones in the following picture and blow up ones like the frog and castle ones. We also put balls in some of our play tents too!

The pop up ones are really easy to store but are best for confident sitting or for lying down and it is best to pop some foam mats underneath or have it on carpet as there is no protective layer on the bottom of the pool.

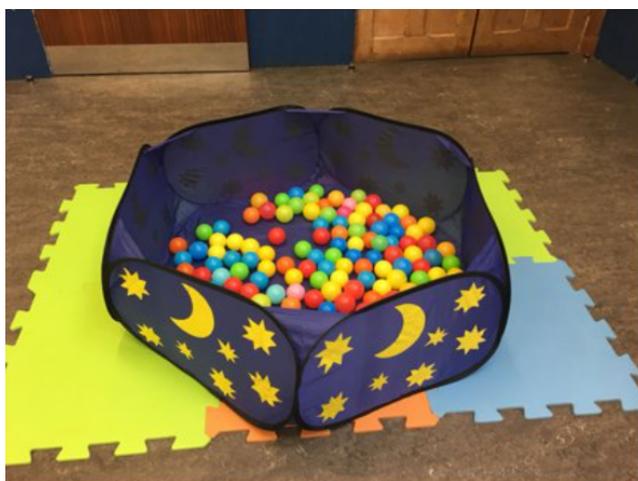
rainbow ball pool

The inflatables are easy to keep clean, very often suitable for water too, are usually padded so can give new sitters support as well as those lying or sitting. Caution is needed with them as they do get damaged more easily and although they deflate for storage if you are able to get them back in the original box you are a genius!

Our advice for little people is to have one layer of balls in the bottom of your pool, with our babies we are looking at giving them as much information from their muscles and joints as possible, this is called proprioception and keeps us organised and calm. Our little ones will be getting lots of this information from the floor and the sides of the ball pool. Putting lots of balls in doesn't give them a 'firm' surface to sit against so they get less of that information that keeps them calm and aware of their body position. Playing with less balls in the pool still gives your baby the experience of playing with lots of balls while working on their hand to eye co-ordination and finger positioning while getting lots of information through their muscles and joints and working on their gross motor skills too.

rainbow ball pool

To wash the balls, pop them in the bath with a little soap and hose them down with your shower, pop in a washing basket and leave outside on a lovely day to dry off. So ball pools are great, but less is more when it comes to what you put into it for babies. When your little one is mobile, top your ball pool up!



home made rainbows



Our rainbow themed activity is in appreciation of our NHS staff and all the keyworkers who are keeping us all well and safe. This week we are making some home made rainbows to show our little ones and give them an amazing opportunity to hold and touch lots of textures with your supervision

home made rainbows

We've made ours with a paper plate, cotton wool and tissue but you can use anything for yours, from the template on the next page to fabrics at home laid out in an arc, be creative, we'd love to see them!



