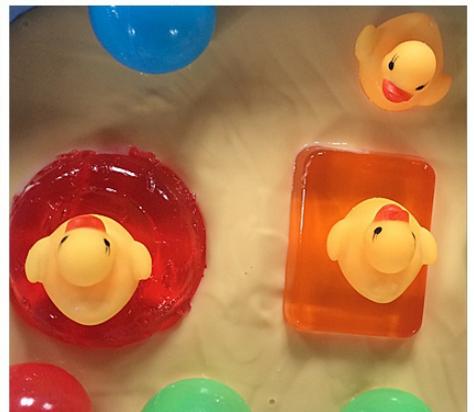
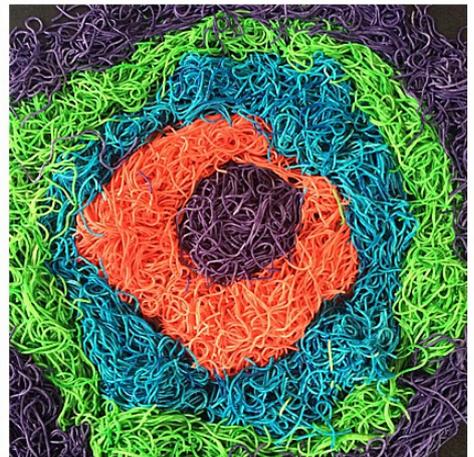
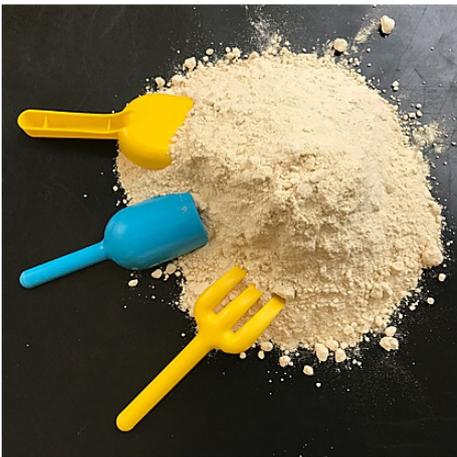
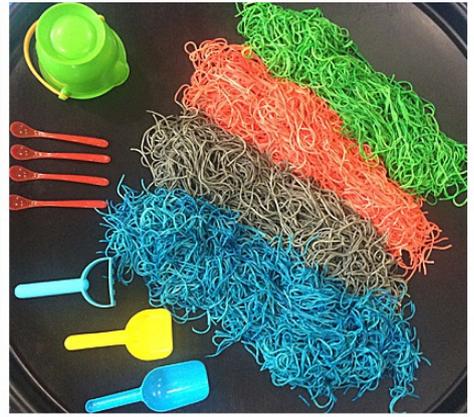


# 5 messy play ideas



# 5 messy play ideas

Introducing textures into play is amazing for your child's brain development, it gives them early exposure to the multi texture environment we live in and can help avoid sensitivities in later life. Messy play is amazing for sensory development and a session packed full of lots of development opportunities, it is not just about making a mess! It is also about

- exploring new textures, smells and tastes
- improving body positioning
- balance and co-ordination
- exploring colour and shapes
- improving body positioning
- understanding about cause and effect
- builds independence in a safe environment
- social interaction
- offers opportunity for measuring and counting
- developing palmer and pincer grips
- helping develop concepts of size and shapes
- being great for hand eye co-ordination
- introducing new experiences
- communication and language development
- choice and fostering a child's natural curiosity
- creative development

# 5 messy play ideas

The idea of letting your little one become messy can be an overwhelming one but do know that it is amazing for their development!

## Some tips to get going

- Starting off small with a spoonful of yogurt or cooled soup on their high chair tray is amazing.
- Resist all the temptation to wipe your little one down as you go, experiencing the texture on their body and how it feels is the good bit for their brain and lots of different textures together is really helpful too.
- For little ones reluctant to get stuck in, offer it often and don't force your little one to participate. Often it can be the change of temperature when you do messy play that can be the most alarming bit to them so luke warm play is a great way to start
- Give your little one a texture that is familiar to them, for example a washable plastic toy to dip in the texture. Our brain is able to accept new textures easier when things are familiar too.
- Let your little one get use to the texture before sitting them in it. Shallow trays, tupperware boxes and bowls is a great way to start before you sit your little one in a tuff tray.

# cloud dough



We love cloud dough in our messy play classes, it is very tactile, mouldable and little ones love to squeeze it in their fingers and drop it. It is a fine dough which when pressed mounds into lumps and it is the ultimate messy play station! We couple our cloud dough with colourful toys, to provide a visual contrast and interest for the little ones.

All the ingredients are safe for little ones 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.

Our cloud dough recipe

4 cups of flour

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

# cloud dough

This makes a lovely portion of dough so do scale back if it is for a small area or only one child.

We make our cloud dough 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 little ones but you can keep it in an airtight box for up to a week.

It is a great idea to have some plastic toys to hand so your little one can experience a new texture while there is a familiar one present. The dough pours well so stacking cups are helpful and it can also be moulded into shapes. We pop our cloud dough into a tuff tray but you can use any kind of container or box.

# cloud dough

## Our little ones 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
- auditory when listening to parents or care givers and the noise of the toys against the tray

# breadcrumbs



Crumbs are amazing to play with, they smell amazing, pour easily, mould in your hand and can be moulded into hills and shapes that you can run toys down and through and you can split up with your hand.

We blend bread in a blender and tend to start with just plain bread before to get little ones use to the texture and sensory experience before using any colour. The bread blends down into a fine dust that is an easy tidy too - sweep and Hoover friendly!

To add colour add a very tiny amount of gel food colouring to one of the slices of bread by spreading it on a corner and blend, the colour spreads to the rest of the crumb. Place in a container and allow it to dry out before introducing it to your little one. We make our crumb the day before using it and keep it refrigerated until use. It is easy to dust off your little one and colourfast as long as you don't introduce liquid to the crumb.

# edible sand



Blending biscuits are an easy way to create a crumb that has a sand like texture. You can choose a low sugar variety and use small amounts for your little one to feel and touch, they eat less of it than you think!

The trays show ginger nut biscuits, digestives and oat teething biscuits in trays that we've prepared for lots of little ones! We take the biscuits and blend them to a very fine crumb and pop them with toys that encourage their motor skills as they rake, shovel and pour the crumb.

It is a really engaging texture and it does feel a lot like sand. Often people are concerned that it will encourage their little one to taste real sand when they do make it to a beach. In our experience little ones are keen to taste real sand whether they have played with the texture or not so closely monitoring their play in different environments is recommended.

# paint



Paint is a great texture to play with an an amazing way to add creativity to play.

Start with no mess painting where you pop a little paint and paper in a ziplock bag and encourage your little one to hold, touch, stand and sit on it to move the paint around the bag. To remove the painting cut the bag open and peel it out carefully and leave it out to dry. No mess painting is often an activity that needs repeated as your little one gets use to the texture, temperature and force needed to spread the paint around.

You can then move onto edible paint, if you have a little one who loves to put things in their mouth. The middle photo above shows 'paint' made from yogurt and tiny amounts of colour. It is easy to spread on surfaces like trays (easy to wash!) and paper. It is not able to be kept as a piece of artwork but it is an amazing texture to discover

# paint

Real paint should be introduced once your little one is less likely to put things in their mouths.

Always choose a non-toxic paint and ones like crayola are easy to wash off surfaces and out of clothes. Initially little ones will use their hands more than tools to paint with but once they are ready you can add chunky brushes, sponges, spoons, cotton pads and spreaders to move the paint around.

Transferring the paint into a little pot with a top on or in a small dish can help control the paint that reaches the paper and help control the mess too!

# pasta play



For a firmer texture that you can introduce into play pasta can be a great texture to play with and it can be played with plain or coloured. We have used both plain and coloured in play. When you colour it it can be quite dramatic visually adding another element to play.

Cook a little extra pasta and when it is warm rather than hot add a drop of oil to keep the pasta pieces separate. Add a tiny amount of gel food colouring to the pasta and stir well. The pasta will take on the colour and be quite vibrant from a tiny amount of colouring.

Allow the pasta to dry out and the colour won't transfer to your little one during play.

# textures are amazing in play

Messy play is incredible for our brains accepting that texture is safe and that we can feel and touch lots of different textures. Letting your little one feel, experience and play in texture can support brain development. If your little one finds the experience too much, step it back and take it slowly, there is no need to avoid it and introducing texture now will assist with their educational journey too.

Introduce texture slowly, repeat if often and have lots of fun!

And finally, take lots of photos! The photos from messy play are always incredible