

Play is the key way children learn about themselves, others and the world they live in. It is essential to their learning, development, health, and physical, mental and social well-being – and it's FUN! Play provides the building blocks to be ready for school.



## Rice Play

Playing with rice fascinates children. Children may respond to sensory experiences like rice play in a variety of ways. Some children will dive straight in, while others may explore more cautiously.

### Did you know?

It can be very calming to run your hands through a textured material like rice.

Children benefit from having the space and time to explore in their own way and at their own pace.

### Add language

During rice play you can talk about how things move, feel, smell and sound. Make a comment, pause and wait. Give them a chance to add to the conversation. Ask occasional questions that require some thinking and reasoning e.g. "What would happen if we ...." "What could we use to ...." Encourage experimenting and exploring through these questions. This helps develop early science skills.

### Other development

During rice play, fine motor strength (including the pincer grip when picking up tiny grains of sand) and hand-eye coordination are developed. These are helpful for handwriting later at school.

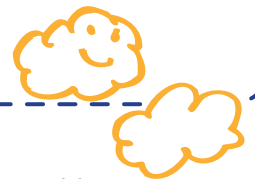
Children can help to make coloured rice.



Just put some rice in a zip lock bag and add food colouring and a touch of vinegar. Then squeeze and squish the bag until it's all coloured. The rice will quickly dry. Children love being engaged in the creating process as well as playing.

### Variations

You can make a discovery container by filling a jar with rice and other small items. Your child can think of items to include. They can collect them from around the house. Try including some small metal based items such as paper clips, metal buttons or small lengths of pipe cleaners. Then rub a magnet along the side of the container. Watch what sticks to the magnet! This helps develop your child's thinking and problem solving skills.



- Playgroup WA has a treasure trove of play activities for babies, toddlers and 3-5 year olds, for home and playgroup. These play activities cover a balanced diet of play across sensory, movement, language and thinking skill areas.

You can find them at [www.playgroupwa.com.au/playideas](http://www.playgroupwa.com.au/playideas) or visit [www.facebook.com/playgroupwa](https://www.facebook.com/playgroupwa)