

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.



Sensory Play

Sensory play – exploring the body's senses of sight, sound, touch, taste, smell, balance and movement, is vital for your toddler's development. When your toddler is engrossed in repeating the same activity over and over again they are making important brain connections and mastering a new skill. Slow down and let them practise and learn from the experience!

Did you know?

The sense of movement is important for developing balance and coordination. It can also be calming for some children (like the slow rocking of a hammock).

Add language

Different kinds of sensory play open opportunities for learning new words that match experiences. You could say:

- “round and round” or “up and down” to match words to movement sensations
- “noisy motorbike” or “quiet voices” to match words to what can be heard
- “sticky mud”, “smooth tiles” or “rough carpet” etc. to match words to how things feel to touch

Using describing words with naming words helps to build the length of your child's sentences..

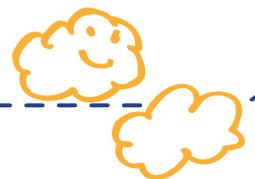


Other development

Swinging, bouncing and spinning are not only fun but develop your toddler's sense of movement and balance.

Sensory play doesn't always need to be messy or big. Puzzles that make sounds when you correctly put in the pieces will provide extra motivation for your toddler. It can motivate your toddler to keep trying with tricky pieces, while also developing their fine motor and visual skills.

Scratch and sniff books, and books with interesting textures can help engage your toddler in the joy of book sharing.



- 📌 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 or visit www.facebook.com/playgroupwa

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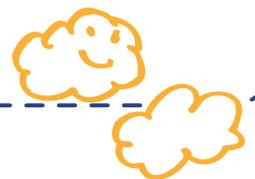
Sensory Play continued...

Variations

Regularly provide a wide range of sensory experiences e.g. finger painting or playing in sand or mud, experiencing different sounds and smells! Encourage your toddler to give new things a go. Try not to push them into doing something they don't enjoy but show them it can be fun!

Some children have difficulty taking in and responding to information from their senses. For some children, a little bit of sensory stimulation feels like a LOT and they can get overwhelmed. For some children, a lot of sensory stimulation feels very little and they take a long time to respond. Watching your toddler and their reaction to sensory stimulation (sights, smells, tastes, sounds, touch, movement) helps you get to know them better. This helps you to know what level of input they need to get them involved and what level to stop at before they get overwhelmed. Some of your toddler's tantrums can just be that their sensory system is overloaded.

All toddlers need some regular quiet times of stillness and silence without overt sensory stimulation – quiet, slow breathing, listening to the silence. Just being peaceful and still.



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