

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

Engaging children's senses during play can help them to focus, understand and remember more. Children's sensory systems are strongly linked to memory and learning. Think of the memories triggered when you smell cut grass, hot bitumen or perhaps sunscreen lotion.

Did you know?

Learning is improved when lots of our senses are engaged at the same time. That is why your child will learn more from real world experiences like seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, moving rather than from television, tablet devices or electronic games.

Add language

Add some more complex words to your child's vocabulary like "delicious", "tangy", "bitter" or "savoury" as you smell or taste different foods. Ask occasional questions that get your child predicting what something might feel, sound, smell or taste like.

Other development

Comparing, contrasting and grouping things by sensory attributes i.e. smell, taste, colour, texture, sound etc. builds science and maths skills. Compare things that are loud and quiet, soft and hard, smooth and rough, sweet and savoury, etc.



Variations

Cooking together is a fabulous sensory activity. Children will love experiencing different textures like dough or cake mix; the smells of ingredients like vanilla, lemon, or garlic as well as the smell of a baking cake filling the kitchen; let alone the tastes and sights of the foods!

- 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...

You can play “guess that smell” using items from the garden or kitchen; or experiment with taste and group different foods together using concepts like “the same” or “opposite” such as crunchy and soft.

Don't forget the other senses too! Try listening games and lots of movement with your child to add to the sensory smorgasbord!

Encourage your child 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! We all have different sensory preferences and that's ok. However, if you think your child's sensory likes or dislikes are preventing them from participating in activities or doing their everyday routine, you might like to talk to your child health nurse or doctor.



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