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Learning Through PLAYtrays®



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SENSORY

Learning Through PLAYtrays®
Early Years Newsletter

APRIL

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April PLAY IDEAS

Welcome to April's sensory activities!
This month, let's explore spring and Earth with these nature experiences:

1. **Sight:** Birdwatching Adventure. Spend some time outdoors watching for different types of birds.
2. **Hearing:** Bird Chirping Soundtrack. Play a soundtrack of various bird chirps and try to recreate the sounds using your voice or musical instruments.
3. **Smell:** Fresh Cut Grass. Spend time outdoors after the lawn has been mowed and inhale the fresh scent of cut grass. Discuss how it smells different from other green plants.
4. **Taste:** Earth Day Smoothies. Make smoothies using seasonal fruits and some greens. Celebrate Earth Day by talking about how these ingredients grow and why they are good for health.
5. **Touch:** Planting Seeds. Get hands-on with soil and seeds to start a small garden. Feel the texture of different types of seeds and soils, and discuss what plants need to grow.



Sensory Recipe Idea to Try!

Spring Flower Jelly

Ingredients:

- 2 cups clear gelatin
- Edible flowers
- 4 cups water
- 1/4 cup sugar
- Food coloring (optional)

Instructions:

1. Prepare the gelatin according to the package instructions. If using unflavored gelatin, dissolve the sugar in the water before adding the gelatin.
2. Pour a thin layer of gelatin into a clear dish or mold and let it set in the refrigerator for about 15 minutes.
3. Arrange the edible flowers on the partially set gelatin.
4. Carefully pour the remaining gelatin over the flowers, ensuring they are fully submerged.
5. Allow the jelly to set completely in the refrigerator for several hours or overnight.

Children can observe the flowers in the jelly, touch the smooth, wobbly texture, and try to "dig" it out with their fingers.

Always supervise children during sensory play and ensure that all materials are safe and age-appropriate.

SENSORY CHECKLIST



Sensory Processing : Improve sensory processing

Sensory processing involves how the brain organizes and responds to information from the senses. Developing this skill helps children understand and respond to their environment. In the early years, it supports overall sensory development and learning. As children grow, they encounter a variety of sensory experiences that can shape their ability to focus, learn, and interact with the world around them. Incorporating sensory play into daily routines is beneficial and a big part of overall development.

Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) is a condition where the brain has difficulty receiving and responding to information that comes through the senses. Children with SPD might be overly sensitive or under-responsive to stimuli like sounds or textures. This can impact their daily activities, learning, and social interactions.

Can a child have a Sensory Processing Disorder?

APRIL

Sensory Processing Checklist

- ☐ Child engages in sensory play activities involving multiple senses (Ages 1-2)
- ☐ Child shows appropriate responses to sensory stimuli (e.g., not overreacting to loud noises) (Ages 2-3)
- ☐ Child demonstrates ability to transition between activities with different sensory inputs (Ages 2-3)
- ☐ Child shows curiosity and exploration in new sensory activities (Ages 2-3)
- ☐ Child can express discomfort with certain sensory inputs and seeks help (Ages 2- 3)
- ☐ Child participates in group sensory activities and interacts with peers (Ages 3)
- ☐ Child identifies favorite sensory activities and seeks them out (Ages 3-4)
- ☐ Child engages in complex sensory play without becoming overwhelmed, shows confidence (Ages 4-5)

How to Support Your Child at Home

- ☐ Provide a variety of sensory activities involving different senses (e.g., tactile, auditory, visual)
- ☐ Create a sensory-friendly space at home where your child can explore different materials
- ☐ Offer activities that involve multiple sensory inputs, such as cooking or gardening
- ☐ Use calming sensory activities, like light table play or quiet time with soft music
- ☐ Observe your child's reactions to different sensory inputs and adjust activities accordingly
- ☐ Encourage play with sensory bins filled with different textures and objects
- ☐ Offer sensory toys, such as fidget spinners, squishy balls, or textured books

