Sensory / Tactile Play Activities

Instructions of use:

1. ALWAYS SUPERVISE YOUR CHILD CLOSELY DURING THESE ACTIVITIES.

2. Do not use any activities which you feel are not suitable for you or your child

3. If your child does not like a specific activity, skip it and choose another one. Try the one they did not like in 3 weeks' time again and see if they still feel the same. If they do – keep focussing on the activities they do enjoy.

4. You can do as many of these as you have time for.

Once a day / once every 2 days / twice a week…..every bit helps. Even if you only spend 5 minutes on the activity, it will still be beneficial to your child's development.

5. Make the activity structured:

This way the child knows there is an end to the activity as well. For this you can use visual timers, (e.g. app on your phone / tablet / egg timers) so they can see the time is getting less.

Start with a short time (e.g. 2 minutes), and ensure them they can do a fun activity of their choice after (if they are reluctant to participate).

6. Try to do the activities in the same place, e.g. on a specific table, on a placemat. This increases the child's understanding that it is play and it helps to manage their expectations about the coming activities.

7. Before you sit down to do the sensory play activity, it will be beneficial if you can do a quick movement activity, e.g. any of the animal walks mentioned. The **deep pressure to the child's palms** when doing these activities, slightly desensitise their hands to touch and will allow them to engage with the activities more easily. You can also do deep pressure with your hands to your child's hands, like a quick hand massage. OR you can play a game on the floor where the child has to crawl – like pushing a car along the floor. This provides the same deep pressure to the palms.

8. Provide your child with clear guidance as to what is expected of them during the activity. Sometimes you may have to demonstrate the activity to them first so they have an example of how to do it.

Animal walks:

| Table
hold for the count of 3 | Crab Walk
3 times | Bear Walk
3 times |

 NEVER FORCE A CHILD TO TOUCH A TEXTURE THAT THEY DO NOT WANT TO.

Instead try to encourage this by showing them how they can play in it.

Offer them other toys to interact with the texture, such as spoons, shovels, paintbrushes etc.

Children generally tolerate textures in the following order:

DRY Textures → **IN BETWEEN Textures** → **MESSY Textures**

IMPORTANT: This means you should <u>always</u> start with DRY TEXTURES.
Once you child comfortably plays with these, then you move to IN BETWEEN TEXTURES.
Once they can play with these textures comfortably, you move to MESSY TEXTURES.

DRY TEXTURES
(all items are uncooked / raw and does not stick to the skin at all)
Half fill an empty 2L ice-cream container with any of the items below (or with a mixture of different ones). You can use a larger container if you have one, to enable them to immerse their hands in it.

Games to play:
1. Hide small toys (e.g. animals, pegs, and blocks) in the container amongst the beans / lentils / flour / etc and let the child try to find them all. As you hide them, count with the child, so he knows how many to find.

2. Put utensils in the box, e.g. plastic spoons / forks / cups / measuring cups and let them play with these, e.g. transferring beans/ lentils / etc. into a cup using a spoon. The can fill one container from another with the items below. Or pour it from one container into another.

3. Let the child try to hide his hands in the beans / lentils/ etc.

Use any of the following (or a mixture of them) to put in the container:

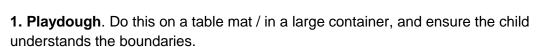✓ Dry beans   ✓ Lentils

- ✓ Corn
- ✓ Rice
- ✓ Split peas
- ✓ Oatmeal
- ✓ Pasta (but be careful with this, as some types may have sharp edges when broken)

- ✓ Popcorn kernels
- ✓ Birdseed
- ✓ Marbles
- ✓ scraps of fabric
- ✓ koosh bal

IN BETWEEN Texture Play Ideas:
(Textures that are not dry, yet do not stick to the skin)

1. Playdough. Do this on a table mat / in a large container, and ensure the child understands the boundaries.
To provide more structure let the child press out forms in the playdough.
Let the child pick out beads out of the playdough. Let them count with you when you put them in so he knows how many to take out. Do not do more items hidden in the playdough than 10 to start with.

2. Damp Sand
To make this more structured, build a sandcastle. Or fill forms / shapes with sand and make sand shapes.

3. Cooked noodles
Give the child utensils to play with and let then transfer the cooked noodles to a bowl.
Or they can try and find hidden treasures / toys in the pasta using a fork / other utensil to stir the pasta.
Encourage your child to try and find toys in the cooked pasta using their hands as well.

4. Squishy type fidget toys

Your child can play with these while they watch TV or any other time.

5. Water bead play

e.g. Hide small toys / objects in this and the child has to find them.

6. Kinetic sand / moon sand play

Homemade colored moon sand recipe:
(there are many recipes on Pinterest or you can buy it)

- 4 cups play sand

- 2 cup corn flour (corn starch in US)

- 1 cup water

- 2 tbsp. colored powder paint

- huge sprinkling of glitter

MESSY TEXTURES :

(Textures that stick to the skin: these are the most challenging!)

REMEMBER: Only start with these textures when you are sure your child is comfortable with the dry and medium textures above.

Provide your child utensils to play with these. E.g. plastic spoons, containers, plastic forks, cups to pour it to and from, etc. so they don't immediately have to use their bare hands.

You can start by putting some of the textures in a zip-lock bag and allowing the child draw shapes on this or just push around objects inside to explore the texture and the sensation, but not the wetness as well.

If your child can handle the sensory bags then you can move to wet textures in play.

- ✓ Pudding or yogurt
- ✓ Shaving cream, play foam, or whipping cream
- ✓ Finger paints
- ✓ Mud
- ✓ cooked oatmeal
- ✓ bubbles

cornflour and water