



## MESSY PLAY

### What is messy play?

Messy play is when your child uses their hands to play and explore messy materials (e.g. finger paint)

### Why is messy play important?

To become comfortable with tolerating different touch experiences

### When children have difficulty with messy play, they may:

- Be reluctant to participate in messy play
- Explore the material tentatively
- Become upset if their hands are messy (e.g. at meal time)

### How can I help my child participate in messy play:

- Remember that being messy is okay
- Never force a child to put his hands into a messy play activity
- Use a container or baking sheet to keep the area defined
- Offer a child an apron and have water or washcloth available
- Start with dry materials (e.g. rice, dried pasta) before trying wet (e.g. goop, finger paint)
- Use tools to play with messy material (e.g. stick, spoon, cup, and bowl)
- Hide objects in the messy material, use containers for pouring and mixing, drive vehicles through it, etc.



## IDEAS FOR “MESSY” PLAY

### Dry materials:

- Cornmeal
- Rice
- Sand
- Dried pasta
- Dried beans
- Magic bag – use a Ziploc bag and add their favourite treasures to find (i.e. jewellery, dinosaurs, letters, etc).

### Wet materials:

- Fun foam soap
- Pudding
- **Bubble painting** - Add a little tempera non-toxic paint to bubbles. Using a bubble wand or straw - blow paint onto large sheets of paper. As the bubble burst they make a neat design. Be careful don't drink it!
- **Playdough** - Involve the kids in the play dough making experience. Mix ½ cup warm water with 2 tsp. oil and ½ cup salt. Add 1 cup flour and 1 tsp. cream tarter. Mix well until smooth. Add flour as needed to decrease stickiness. Add food coloring or Kool-Aid to increase the sensory experience
- **Brains** - Mix a package of cooked spaghetti with a little oil. Hide things in the noodles or use scissors to snip noodles.
- **Goop** - Mix cornstarch with a little bit of water. Add water and mix well until a paste forms. The heat of your hand will make the mixture thinner and as it cools it will become harder to manipulate. Add food coloring, dry paint or sparkles to increase the experience.
- **Baby Goo** - Mix powdered Ivory Soap with a little bit of water. Add water to change consistency - the less water the thicker it will be and can be shaped into snowmen or crayons (could use these crayons in bathtub on bath wall). The thinner it is the more like goop it becomes.

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