

# SENSORY SENSATIONS



## Sensory Play

### WHAT IS SENSORY PLAY?

Sensory play is simply any activity that engages the senses. This not only includes the five main senses of touch, smell, sight, taste, and sound but also movement, balance, and spatial awareness.

Just about any experience a child engages in will stimulate at least one or more senses. However, some types of play will be more stimulating to the senses than others.

Not all children will be drawn to all sensory experiences. While it is okay to *encourage* your child to try new and even uncomfortable things, it is important not to *push* the child to do things too far out of his or her comfort zone.



“Robust neural pathways form in busy brains as children explore and connect with the world around them through their senses - we call this play.”

-Explorations Early Learning

### WANT TO KNOW MORE?

ABC Kids Listen reflects on the importance of Sensory Play, shares a short audio for children on the five senses and includes some listening/sound experiences. [Click here to find out more about sensory play.](#)

This Sesame Street video features parents' reflections on how they support children to explore their home and surroundings using all of their senses.

[Click here to take a closer look into sensory play.](#)



### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SENSORY PLAY?

At birth, a child's senses are not fully developed. Instead, they develop over time as children engage with the world around them. This means that babies, toddlers, and preschoolers learn about the world by touching, tasting, smelling, seeing, hearing and moving their bodies.

Because young children's senses are still developing, each new sensory experience builds neural pathways that grow the architecture of the brain. The brain growth that occurs through sensory play enhances children's senses which they are then better able to use for learning. For example, as children engage with various textures, they learn which ones are rough/smooth, hard/soft and wet/dry. This awareness is a first step in learning to classify and sort objects.

The amazing thing about sensory play is that it opens the door to so many wonderful learning opportunities such as:

- imaginative play
- language exploration
- fine motor development for pre-writing skills
- coordination
- social interactions
- problem-solving
- self-regulation (emotions and behaviour)
- concentration & memory.

There is another benefit to sensory play that is just as important as all the others. It's FUN!

