

Dudley Children's Occupational Therapy Service
The Sunflower Centre
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Messy Play Ideas

Material ideas:

- Sand
- Playdough
- Shaving foam
- Finger painting
- Cake mixture
- Chalks
- Yoghurt
- Ice cubes
- Dry cereal
- Spaghetti (cooked or uncooked)
- Jelly
- Water
- Digging in the garden
- Offer food cooked for the family for exploration on tray daily

Activity ideas:

- Edible finger paints - using natural yoghurt and food colouring mix these together to create edible finger paint.
- Cotton wool painting - using pegs, attach cotton wool to the pegs and put some paint in pots ready for the child to dip the cotton wool into.
- Fill a box with dry beans and rice or other materials, then hide toys and allow your child to explore and find them.
- Painting on foil
- Sand play - filling a large tray with sand and add various resources for child to develop emptying and filling skills.
- Using feely books and encourage child to touch and feel the different textures.
- Hide dinosaurs or "fossils" in sand or other materials and encourage children to dig and find treasure.
- Encourage games and messy play with food:
 - Start with dry textures, get them used to touching dried rice, pasta, lentils, flour etc. As they become more confident, gradually add wetter textures in very small amounts i.e. exploring dry then cooked pasta, dry then cooked rice, dry and cooked couscous, dry then wet cornflour etc.
 - Hide highly motivating toys in food such as lentils, pasta.

- Where possible allow the child control over activities – develop activities at their own pace.
- Keep a flannel near to them so they can wipe hands if they want to.
- Always remember – Mess is good! Bin liners, old sheets or newspapers will protect the floor from this messy process. Use a table cloth or splash mat to protect soft furnishings if needed.