



## Play and Leisure Explorative Play

### Messy Play – Activity Sheet 1

#### Hints and Tips

Children explore the world through touch. Not all children like all textures and this is perfectly normal, however it is important to give your child plenty of opportunities to experience different touch sensations.

*Never force your child to touch something that they find distressing.*

Do only what the child will tolerate. Tolerance builds up gradually. Over stimulation can result in aggressive behaviour, crying and an increased activity level.

It is essential to approach activities sensitively, starting with less challenging textures (i.e. a texture that is firm and dry) and building towards more challenging textures (i.e. wet and sloppy). Allow your child to control the level of contact and stop when they need to.

#### Activity Ideas

If your child starts to show signs of distress allow them to remove themselves from the activity and wash themselves if they are messy. Here are some activities you might want to try with your child:

- **Feely Bag** - Place different objects in a bag such as plastic animals, building bricks, textured balls, cotton wool balls, sponge etc. Encourage your child to choose an object from the bag and identify the object starting with allowing your child to look in the bag first then asking them to do this with their eyes closed



- **Playdough** - Encourage your child to play with playdough. Use shop bought playdoh or why not make your own playdough (see below for recipe). Use tools such as rolling pins, cutters, extruders, spoons, blunt knives, scissors etc.

*Please be aware that playdough (both shop bought and homemade) may contain wheat. Make sure you use a wheat free alternative if there is a known wheat allergy.*



- **Water Play** - Fill a basin in the kitchen sink with soapy water and a variety of unbreakable bottles, cups, beakers, turkey basters, sponges, egg beaters and toy water pumps. Alternatively, fill a large plastic tub with water and toys and set it outside on the grass. Pouring and measuring are excellent for developing the tactile system.



- **Sand Play** - In a sandbox or on a sand table, add small toys (cars, trucks, people and dinosaurs), which your child can arrange and rearrange, bury and rediscover. Alternatives to sand are an empty shoe box or ice-cream tub filled with dried beans, rice, pasta, and popcorn.

- **Rub-a-Dub-Dub** - Encourage your child to rub a variety of textures against their skin (hands and arms, legs and feet). Offer differently textured scrubbers (loofahs, sponges, thick washcloths, foam dish scrubbers, plastic nail brushes etc). Once your child can tolerate the different textured scrubbers add different kinds of soap (oatmeal soap, shaving cream, lotion soap).

2 cups of plain flour  
2 tablespoons of vegetable oil  
½ cup of salt  
2 tablespoons of cream of tartar  
Up to 1 ½ cups of boiling water  
Food colouring (optional)

Mix the dry ingredients and oil in a large mixing bowl, add the colouring to the boiling water (if using). Gradually add the water until it comes together. Once the mixture is cool get your child to knead the dough until the stickiness has gone.

The playdough should last for up to 6 months if stored in an air tight container.



### Playdough Recipe