The Child Unplugged

THE ULTIMATE SUMMER COLLECTION

Simple play ideas to connect.
Explore & Support yours babies developmenr

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Simple Play Ideas



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Introduction

This book is packed with fun, hands-on summer activities that encourage children to learn, create, explore, and play. From sensory play and crafts to nature adventures and learning challenges, each activity helps build creativity, confidence, fine motor skills, and a love of learning through meaningful play.







Why Summer activities are So Valuable

- Encourage creativity and imagination.
- Support learning through play.
- Develop fine and gross motor skills.
- Build problem-solving and critical thinking abilities.
- Promote sensory exploration and discovery.
- Strengthen communication and language skills.
- Encourage curiosity about the world around them.
- Foster independence and confidence.
- Support social skills through collaborative activities.
- Help children stay engaged during the summer months.
- Create opportunities for outdoor exploration and nature play.

How to Support Play at Home

Create a fun and inviting space where children can explore summer activities at their own pace. Encourage creativity, celebrate their ideas, and allow them to learn through hands-on play, exploration, and discovery.

Basic setup:

- Gather the materials needed for the chosen activity.
- Use trays, mats, or containers to organise the play space.

Simple steps:

- Introduce the activity and materials.
- Encourage children to explore, create, investigate, and experiment.
- Ask open-ended questions and discuss their discoveries.

Helpful tips:

- Follow children's interests and ideas.
- Include sensory materials to enrich learning.
- Encourage both independent and collaborative play.







Ideas

- Explore nature through scavenger hunts and outdoor adventures.
- Create summer crafts and artwork.
- Build with loose parts and natural materials.

SUMMER SCAVENGER HUNT

WHATS NEEDED:

- Printable scavenger hunt checklist
- Pencil, crayon, or marker
- Clipboard (optional)
- Hat and sunscreen for outdoor adventures
- Small bag or basket (optional for collecting fallen natural treasures such as leaves)

WHAT TO DO:

- Take your scavenger hunt checklist outdoors.
- Walk around your garden, local park, playground, or neighbourhood.
- Look carefully for each item on the list: A flower, A butterfly, A cloud, A green leaf & A bird
- Tick or colour in each item when you find it.
- Talk about what you see, hear, smell, and feel as you explore.
- Celebrate when all items have been found!

BENEFITS:

- Develops observation and attention-to-detail skills.
- Encourages curiosity and exploration of the natural world.
- Supports language development through discussions about nature.
- Promotes physical activity and outdoor play.
- Builds confidence as children independently search and discover.
- Encourages mindfulness and appreciation of the environment.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Younger Children: Use picture clues.
- Older Children: Add harder items to find.
- Sensory: Find soft, rough, smooth, or scented items.
- Literacy: Write the names of items found.
- STEM: Count and compare discoveries.
- Photography: Take photos instead of ticking items off.

SUNFLOWER COUNTING

WHATS NEEDED:

- Sunflower counting worksheet
- Pencil
- Crayons, markers, or coloured pencils

WHAT TO DO:

- Look at each sunflower.
- Count the petals carefully.
- Write the correct number beside the flower.
- Colour the sunflower when finished.
- Repeat for all sunflowers on the page.

BENEFITS:

- Develops counting and number recognition skills.
- Encourages one-to-one correspondence.
- Strengthens observation skills.
- Supports fine motor development through writing and colouring.
- Builds confidence with early maths concepts.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Younger Children: Count petals together.
- Older Children: Add simple addition or subtraction questions.
- Literacy: Write the number word.
- Sensory: Create sunflowers using loose parts.
- Group Play: Compare answers with a partner.
- Nature Extension: Count petals on real flowers.

BUILD A SANDCASTLE PLAN

WHATS NEEDED:

- Build a Sandcastle Plan worksheet
- Pencil
- Crayons, markers, or coloured pencils

WHAT TO DO:

- Think about your dream sandcastle.
- Draw the main structure.
- Add details such as towers, flags, bridges, windows, and a moat.
- Colour your design.
- Share your sandcastle and explain its special features.

BENEFITS:

- Encourages creativity and imagination.
- Develops planning and design skills.
- Strengthens fine motor skills through drawing and colouring.
- Supports problem-solving and critical thinking.
- Builds confidence through self-expression.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Younger Children: Provide a sandcastle outline to decorate.
- Older Children: Label parts of the sandcastle and add measurements.
- Literacy: Write a story about who lives in the castle.
- STEM: Discuss how real castles and sandcastles are built.
- Group Play: Design a giant sandcastle together.
- Sensory: Build the design using sand, playdough, or loose parts.

LEMONADE STAND MATH

WHATS NEEDED:

- Lemonade Stand Math worksheet
- Pencil
- Crayons, markers, or coloured pencils

WHAT TO DO:

- Read the lemonade stand price: 1 cup = aed 1.
- Work out the cost of: 2 cups, 3 cups, 5 cups
- Write the answers in the spaces provided.
- Draw customers buying lemonade.
- Colour your pictures if desired.

BENEFITS:

- Develops early numeracy skills.
- Introduces addition and multiplication concepts.
- Encourages problem-solving and logical thinking.
- Strengthens number recognition.
- Promotes creativity through drawing and role play.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Younger Children: Count using counters or pictures.
- Older Children: Change prices and calculate totals.
- Literacy: Create signs for the lemonade stand.
- Sensory: Set up a pretend lemonade stand.
- Group Play: Take turns being customers and sellers.
- Extension: Add coins and practise making payments.

WATERMELON SEED COUNTING CRAFT

WHATS NEEDED:

- Watermelon template
- Black stickers or paper seeds
- Glue
- Crayons

WHAT TO DO:

- Colour the watermelon.
- Add the correct number of seeds.
- Count as you place them.
- Decorate the picture.

BENEFITS:

- Develops counting skills.
- Supports fine motor development.
- Encourages creativity.
- Strengthens number recognition.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Use addition challenges.
- Create patterns with seeds.
- Compare quantities.

BEACH BUCKET SORT

WHATS NEEDED:

- Beach Bucket Sort worksheet
- Scissors
- Glue
- Pencil (optional)

WHAT TO DO:

- Cut out the summer item pictures.
- Look at each item carefully.
- Decide where it belongs:Beach Bucket, Picnic Basket, Garden Basket
- Glue each item into the correct basket.
- Check your answers and discuss why each item belongs there.

BENEFITS:

- Develops categorization and sorting skills.
- Encourages logical thinking and decision-making.
- Builds vocabulary related to summer themes.
- Supports fine motor skills through cutting and gluing.
- Promotes observation and reasoning skills.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Younger Children: Sort with adult support.
- Older Children: Add more categories.
- Literacy: Label each basket and item.
- Sensory: Sort real objects instead of pictures.
- Group Play: Work together to sort items.
- Extension: Create your own summer category.

NOODLE PRINTING

WHATS NEEDED:

- Noodles
- Washable paint
- Paper or cardstock
- Paint trays or plates
- Apron or protective covering

WHAT TO DO:

- Pour paint into trays or plates.
- Dip the end of the noodles into the paint.
- Press it onto paper to create a print.
- Repeat using different colours and shapes.
- Create patterns, pictures, or summer scenes.
- Allow the artwork to dry before displaying.

BENEFITS:

- Encourages creativity and artistic expression.
- Develops fine motor skills and hand control.
- Supports colour and shape recognition.
- Strengthens hand-eye coordination.
- Introduces early pattern-making concepts.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Younger Children: Focus on simple stamping.
- Older Children: Create detailed patterns and designs.
- Literacy: Stamp letters to form summer words.
- Maths: Create and extend repeating patterns.
- Group Play: Work together on a large mural.

MY SUMMER MEMORIES PAGE

WHATS NEEDED:

- My Summer Memories Page worksheet
- Pencil
- Crayons, markers, or coloured pencils

WHAT TO DO:

- Think about your favourite summer memory.
- Draw a picture of the activity or experience.
- Write: Where you went, Who was with you, What made it special
- Colour your picture.
- Share your memory with others if you wish.

BENEFITS:

- Encourages reflection and communication skills.
- Develops storytelling and writing abilities.
- Promotes self-expression and confidence.
- Strengthens memory recall and sequencing.
- Supports fine motor skills through writing and drawing.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Younger Children: Dictate answers to an adult.
- Older Children: Write a longer paragraph about the memory.
- Literacy: Add descriptive words and details.
- Sensory: Include collected summer treasures in the artwork.
- Group Play: Share memories with a partner or group.
- Extension: Create a summer memory book.

BUTTERFLY SYMMETRY

WHATS NEEDED:

- Butterfly Symmetry worksheet
- Pencil
- Crayons, markers, or coloured pencils

WHAT TO DO:

- Look carefully at the completed side of the butterfly.
- Draw the missing side to match.
- Add any details needed to make both sides the same.
- Colour both sides using matching colours and patterns.
- Check that your butterfly is symmetrical.

BENEFITS:

- Introduces the concept of symmetry.
- Develops observation and visual discrimination skills.
- Encourages attention to detail.
- Strengthens fine motor and drawing skills.
- Promotes creativity and artistic expression.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Younger Children: Trace the missing side.
- Older Children: Create their own symmetrical butterfly.
- Literacy: Describe the butterfly's colours and patterns.
- Sensory: Make symmetrical butterfly wings with loose parts.
- Group Play: Compare and discuss designs.
- Extension: Look for symmetry in nature.

SUMMER WORD SEARCH

WHATS NEEDED:

- Summer Word Search worksheet
- Pencil, crayon, or highlighter

WHAT TO DO:

- Look at the list of summer words: SUN, BEACH, SHELL, ICE, SWIM, PICNIC, SAND, SUMMER
- Search the puzzle to find each word.
- Circle or highlight the words as you find them.
- Tick off each word from the list.
- Colour the page when finished if desired.

BENEFITS:

- Develops letter recognition skills.
- Strengthens spelling and vocabulary.
- Improves concentration and attention to detail.
- Encourages visual scanning and word recognition.
- Builds confidence with literacy activities.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Younger Children: Search for fewer words.
- Older Children: Add longer or more challenging words.
- Literacy: Use each word in a sentence.
- Group Play: Work together to find all the words.
- Sensory: Form the words using letter tiles or magnetic letters.
- Extension: Create your own summer word search.

NATURE TEXTURE RUBBING

WHATS NEEDED:

- Paper
- Crayons (wrappers removed)
- Leaves, bark, flowers, or other textured natural items

WHAT TO DO:

- Collect a variety of natural materials.
- Place a piece of paper over the item.
- Rub the side of a crayon gently across the paper.
- Watch the texture appear on the page.
- Compare the different patterns and textures you discover.

BENEFITS:

- Encourages sensory exploration.
- Develops observation skills.
- Strengthens fine motor control.
- Promotes creativity and artistic expression.
- Builds awareness of the natural world.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Younger Children: Use larger leaves and simple textures.
- Older Children: Label and compare textures.
- Literacy: Describe textures using words.
- STEM: Sort textures by pattern or type.
- Group Play: Create a shared texture collage.
- Extension: Make a nature texture journal.

PICNIC BASKET PACKING

WHATS NEEDED:

- Picnic Basket Packing worksheet
- Pencil, crayon, or marker

WHAT TO DO:

- Look at all the items on the page.
- Think about what you would take on a picnic.
- Circle the items that belong in the picnic basket.
- Cross out the items that do not belong.
- Discuss why each item was chosen or removed.

BENEFITS:

- Develops critical thinking skills.
- Encourages decision-making and reasoning.
- Builds vocabulary and real-world knowledge.
- Strengthens observation skills.
- Supports fine motor development through circling and crossing out.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Younger Children: Choose from fewer items.
- Older Children: Explain their choices.
- Literacy: Write a picnic shopping list.
- Sensory: Pack a real or pretend picnic basket.
- Group Play: Discuss choices with a partner.
- Extension: Plan a dream picnic menu.

OCEAN ANIMAL MATCH

WHATS NEEDED:

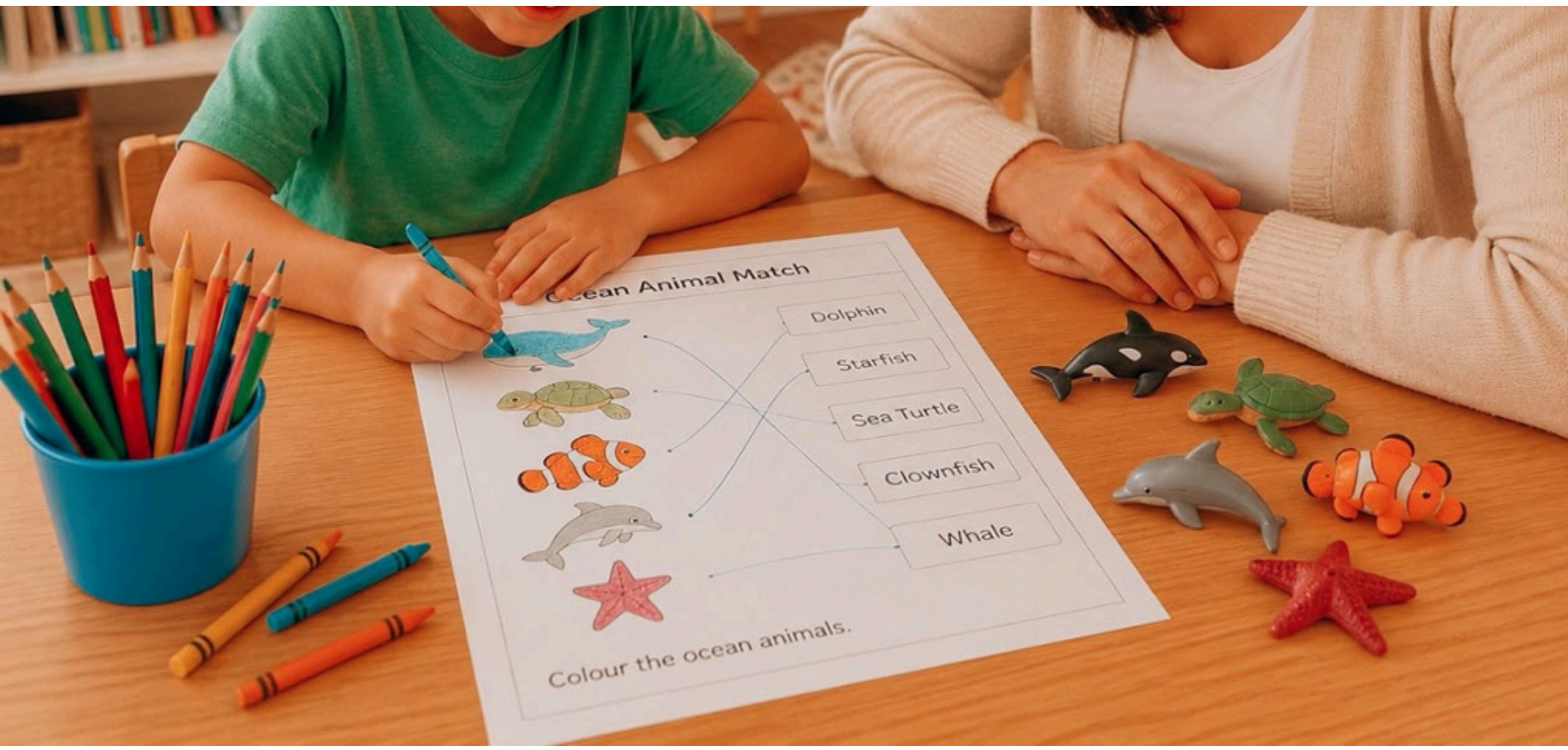
- Ocean Animal Match worksheet
- Pencil
- Crayons, markers, or coloured pencils

WHAT TO DO:

- Look at each ocean animal picture.
- Read the animal names.
- Draw a line to match each animal to its correct name.
- Check your answers.
- Colour the ocean animals.

BENEFITS:

- Builds vocabulary and language skills.
- Develops animal recognition and knowledge of marine life.
- Strengthens reading and word-matching skills.
- Encourages observation and critical thinking.
- Supports fine motor development through drawing and colouring.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Younger Children: Match using picture clues.
- Older Children: Research and write a fact about each animal.
- Literacy: Spell and trace the animal names.
- Sensory: Use ocean animal toys for matching.
- Group Play: Complete the activity with a partner.
- Extension: Create an ocean habitat for the animals.

DESIGN YOUR DREAM ICE CREAM

WHATS NEEDED:

- Paper or activity sheet
- Pencils
- Crayons, markers, or coloured pencils

WHAT TO DO:

- Draw an ice cream cone.
- Add 3 scoops of ice cream.
- Decorate with toppings such as sprinkles, fruit, chocolate chips, or syrup.
- Colour your ice cream creation.
- Give your ice cream a fun name.

BENEFITS:

- Encourages creativity and imagination.
- Develops fine motor skills through drawing and colouring.
- Strengthens hand-eye coordination.
- Supports decision-making and self-expression.
- Builds vocabulary through describing flavours and toppings.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Younger Children: Provide a cone template to decorate.
- Older Children: Add prices and create an ice cream menu.
- Literacy: Write a description of the ice cream.
- Maths: Count and graph favourite flavours.
- Group Play: Share and vote on the most creative design.
- Sensory: Create ice creams using playdough or loose parts.

ICE CREAM SENSORY TRAY

WHATS NEEDED:

- Coloured rice or pom poms
- Ice cream scoops
- Cups or cones
- Loose parts for toppings

WHAT TO DO:

- Set up the sensory tray.
- Scoop "ice cream" into cups or cones.
- Add toppings and decorations.
- Serve creations to friends or family.

BENEFITS:

- Develops fine motor skills.
- Encourages imaginative play.
- Supports creativity and language development.
- Builds hand-eye coordination.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Add menus and prices.
- Use playdough instead of loose parts.
- Create flavour sorting activities.

MAKE A WEATHER CHART

WHATS NEEDED:

- Weather Chart worksheet
- Pencil
- Crayons, markers, or coloured pencils

WHAT TO DO:

- Observe the weather each day for 7 days.
- Draw the matching weather symbol: Sunny, Cloudy, Rainy, Windy
- Record one symbol for each day.
- At the end of the week, look at the completed chart.
- Discuss any weather patterns or changes you noticed.

BENEFITS:

- Develops observation skills.
- Introduces basic weather concepts.
- Encourages scientific thinking and data collection.
- Builds understanding of patterns and change over time.
- Supports recording and graphing skills.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Younger Children: Use stickers instead of drawing symbols.
- Older Children: Record temperature and weather details.
- Literacy: Write a daily weather sentence.
- STEM: Count and compare different weather types.
- Group Play: Create a class weather chart.
- Extension: Predict tomorrow's weather.

FROZEN TOY RESCUE

WHATS NEEDED:

- Small waterproof toys or loose parts
- Ice cube trays, bowls, or containers
- Water
- Warm water in a container
- Child-safe tools such as spoons, pipettes, spray bottles, or toy hammers
- Sensory tray

WHAT TO DO:

- Place small toys inside containers and fill with water.
- Freeze overnight.
- Remove the frozen blocks and place them in a tray.
- Use tools and warm water to melt, chip, spray, and rescue the trapped toys.
- Observe how the ice changes as it melts.
- Continue until all toys have been rescued.

BENEFITS:

- Encourages sensory exploration.
- Develops problem-solving skills.
- Introduces early science concepts such as melting and temperature.
- Strengthens fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination.
- Promotes patience, persistence, and curiosity.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Younger Children: Use smaller ice cubes that melt quickly.
- Older Children: Time the rescue challenge.
- Literacy: Write or draw the rescued items.
- STEM: Predict which method will melt the ice fastest.
- Group Play: Work together to rescue all the toys.
- Extension: Freeze coloured water, flowers, or ocean animals for themed rescues.

SPONGE WATER BOMB CHALLENGE

WHATS NEEDED:

- Sponge water bombs or large sponges
- Bucket or tub of water
- Open outdoor space
- Towels (optional)

WHAT TO DO:

- Soak the sponge water bombs in a bucket of water.
- Squeeze out excess water if needed.
- Toss, catch, and throw the sponge water bombs with a partner.
- Aim at targets or challenge friends to catch them.
- Re-soak and continue playing.
- Try different games and challenges.

BENEFITS:

- Develops gross motor skills.
- Improves hand-eye coordination.
- Encourages physical activity and outdoor play.
- Provides sensory exploration through water play.
- Promotes social interaction and teamwork.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Younger Children: Toss into buckets or targets.
- Older Children: Create obstacle courses and team challenges.
- Maths: Count successful catches or points scored.
- Sensory: Explore squeezing and transferring water.
- Group Play: Play relay races or team games.
- Extension: Use coloured targets and assign different point values.

CREATE A SUMMER STORY

WHATS NEEDED:

- Create a Summer Story worksheet
- Pencil
- Crayons, markers, or coloured pencils

WHAT TO DO:

- Read the story starter: "On the hottest day of summer, I discovered..."
- Think about what happens next.
- Write or dictate your story.
- Draw a picture to match your story.
- Share your story with a friend or family member.

BENEFITS:

- Encourages creativity and imagination.
- Develops storytelling and writing skills.
- Builds vocabulary and language development.
- Promotes self-expression and confidence.
- Strengthens fine motor skills through writing and drawing.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Younger Children: Dictate the story to an adult.
- Older Children: Add characters, dialogue, and details.
- Literacy: Include a beginning, middle, and end.
- Sensory: Use sensory items as story prompts.
- Group Play: Create a collaborative summer story.
- Extension: Turn the story into a mini book.

CITRUS STAMP PAINTING

WHATS NEEDED:

- Citrus fruits (lemons, limes, oranges, or grapefruits)
- Washable paint
- Paper or cardstock
- Paint trays or plates
- Apron or protective covering

WHAT TO DO:

- Cut citrus fruits in half (adult supervision required).
- Pour paint into trays or plates.
- Dip the cut side of the fruit into the paint.
- Press the fruit onto paper to create prints.
- Experiment with different colours and fruit shapes.
- Allow the artwork to dry and display the finished masterpiece.

BENEFITS:

- Encourages creativity and self-expression.
- Develops fine motor skills and hand control.
- Supports sensory exploration through texture, scent, and colour.
- Introduces printmaking and process art techniques.
- Strengthens observation skills by comparing fruit patterns.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Younger Children: Use one colour at a time.
- Older Children: Create repeating patterns or designs.
- Literacy: Label the different citrus fruits used.
- Maths: Count and compare the fruit prints.
- Group Play: Work together on a large mural.
- Extension: Explore other fruits and vegetables for stamping.

SUMMER POTION STATION

WHATS NEEDED:

- Water
- Containers, cups, or potion bottles
- Spoons, pipettes, funnels, and scoops
- Flowers, leaves, herbs, or citrus slices
- Food colouring (optional)
- Glitter or loose parts (optional)
- Sensory tray

WHAT TO DO:

- Set up the potion station with a variety of materials.
- Fill containers with water.
- Add natural materials, colours, and loose parts.
- Mix, stir, pour, and experiment with different combinations.
- Create names for each potion.
- Talk about the colours, scents, and textures created.

BENEFITS:

- Encourages creativity and imaginative play.
- Supports sensory exploration and discovery.
- Develops fine motor skills through pouring and mixing.
- Introduces early science concepts such as mixing, dissolving, and cause and effect.
- Builds language and communication skills through storytelling and potion-making.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Younger Children: Use fewer ingredients and larger containers.
- Older Children: Create potion recipes and record ingredients.
- Literacy: Name and label each potion.
- STEM: Predict what will happen when ingredients are mixed.
- Group Play: Work together to create a giant summer potion.
- Extension: Add themed ingredients for fairy, ocean, garden, or dinosaur potions.

SUMMER SLIME EXPLORATION

WHATS NEEDED:

- Prepared slime
- Sensory tray or container
- Summer-themed loose parts (shells, pom poms, flowers, mini beach items)
- Scoops, tweezers, or tongs
- Containers for sorting

WHAT TO DO:

- Place the slime in a sensory tray.
- Add summer-themed loose parts.
- Stretch, squeeze, roll, and manipulate the slime.
- Hide and find objects within the slime.
- Sort, count, or transfer items using tools.
- Discuss how the slime feels and changes when handled.

BENEFITS:

- Encourages sensory exploration.
- Strengthens fine motor skills and hand muscles.
- Supports creativity and imaginative play.
- Builds language skills through descriptive vocabulary.
- Promotes focus, curiosity, and problem-solving.



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Younger Children: Use taste-safe slime alternatives.
- Older Children: Measure and compare slime properties.
- Literacy: Describe the slime using sensory words.
- Maths: Count and sort hidden objects.
- Group Play: Create slime challenges together.
- Extension: Add summer colours, scents, or themed treasures.

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Slow, calm sensory experiences for babies and young children

Using familiar, accessible materials