The Child Unplugged

# WORRY-FREE PLAY TASTE-SAFE ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS

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

**31**
Simple Play Ideas




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# Introduction

Taste-safe activities are a wonderful way to support early development through safe, sensory play. Young children explore the world using all their senses—including taste—so providing edible or taste-safe materials allows them to play freely and safely. These activities encourage exploration of textures, colours, and movements in a hands-on, engaging way. Taste-safe play isn't about creating something perfect—it's about discovery, curiosity, and experience. As children touch, squish, and explore, they build confidence, creativity, and important early skills, all while giving parents peace of mind during playtime







# Why are Taste Safe activities So Valuable

- Safe Exploration: Allows babies and toddlers to explore freely, even if they put items in their mouths
- Sensory Development: Engages touch, taste, sight, and smell
- Builds Confidence: Encourages independent, worry-free play
- Supports Curiosity: Promotes natural exploration and discovery
- Develops Motor Skills: Strengthens hand movements through scooping, squishing, and grasping

Every scribble, line, and swirl is part of the learning process.

# How to Support Play at Home

Create a safe, relaxed space where children can explore freely using taste-safe materials.

**Basic setup:**

- Taste-safe ingredients (e.g., yogurt, oats, fruit purée)
- Easy-clean surface or tray
- Simple tools (spoons, cups)

**Simple steps:**

- Offer a small amount of materials
- Let your child explore, touch, and taste
- Sit nearby and interact gently

**Helpful tips:**

- Always supervise closely
- Keep activities simple
- Dress for mess or use a mat







# Ideas

Use everyday kitchen ingredients to create fun, safe sensory experiences that encourage exploration and discovery.

# DOUGH OATS

## WHATS NEEDED:

- 1 cup oats (rolled oats work best)
- ½ cup flour
- ¼ cup water (adjust as needed)
- 2–3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- Optional: cinnamon, vanilla, or food coloring for scent/color
- Bowl and spoon for mixing
- Tray for play

## WHAT TO DO:

- In a bowl, mix oats, flour, and salt.
- Add oil and water gradually, stirring until a soft dough forms.
- Knead lightly with hands—add more water or flour if needed for the right consistency.
- Place on a tray or mat and let kids explore: roll, flatten, cut, or mold.

## BENEFITS:

- Soft, grainy texture kids can touch and explore.
- Rolling, kneading, and shaping strengthen hands.
- Mold shapes, make pretend foods, or build small structures.
- Taste safe
- Repetitive kneading is soothing and focusing.
- Encourages counting, measuring, and experimenting.




## HOW TO ADAPT:

- Add Textures: Mix in rice, beans, or pasta for an extra sensory experience.
- Edible Version: Skip the salt and let kids taste small pieces safely.
- Scented Dough: Add cinnamon, nutmeg, vanilla, or cocoa powder.
- Themed Play: Use cookie cutters for shapes, pretend baking, or seasonal designs.
- Combine with Other Sensory Materials: Add small toys, leaves, or natural items for exploration.

# FRUIT PAINT

## WHATS NEEDED:

- Fresh fruits (strawberries, blueberries, kiwi, oranges, bananas, etc.)
- Knife for adult use (to chop fruits)
- Bowls
- Tuff tray for messy play
- Paper, cardstock for painting
- Optional: brushes, stamps & cookie cutters,

## WHAT TO DO:

- Chop fruit
- Mash fruit with a fork or spoon, or blend to make a smoother paint.
- Pour into small bowls
- Provide paper, brushes, or stamps for painting.
- Encourage kids to explore colors, mix fruits, and create designs.
- Discuss colors, textures, and smells as they play.

## BENEFITS:

- Kids experience textures, colors, and smells of different fruits.
- Squishing, brushing, stamping, & spreading paint strengthens hand muscles.
- Kids can paint freely or make fruit-themed art.
- Introduces fruits, colors, and shapes in a playful way.
- Edible & Safe




## HOW TO ADAPT:

- Stamping Fun – Use halves of apples, oranges, or lemons as stamps.
- Rainbow Paints – Assign different fruits to make a ~rainbow artwork.
- Scented Play – Let kids smell each fruit before painting to engage multiple senses.
- Mix with Other Materials – Add oats, rice, or edible glitter for texture.

# CHICKPEA FOAM

## WHATS NEEDED:

- 1 can chickpeas (drained, liquid reserved)
- Hand blender or whisk
- Large tray or shallow container
- Optional: small cups, spoons, scoops, and safe toys for play
- Optional: food coloring for extra fun

## WHAT TO DO:

- Drain chickpeas, reserving the liquid (aquafaba).
- Whip the aquafaba with a hand blender or whisk until it forms stiff peaks (like meringue).
- Spoon the fluffy foam onto a tray or shallow container.
- Add optional food coloring or small toys for sensory exploration.

## BENEFITS:

- Light, fluffy, and soft to touch.
- Scooping, patting, and squeezing builds hand strength.
- Make shapes, patterns, or “clouds.”
- Explore texture, volume, and trapped air.
- Soft, soothing airy texture
- Made from simple kitchen ingredients.




## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Colorful Foam** – Add a few drops of food coloring to make rainbow clouds.
- **Hidden Objects** – Bury small toys for a sensory “treasure hunt.”
- **Themed Play** – Snow scenes, clouds, or pretend baking.
- **Add Scent** – Safe extracts like vanilla or lemon can add a sensory twist.
- **Tools & Utensils** – Spoons, scoops, or cookie cutters for shaping and fine motor practice.
- Encourage kids to squish, pat, and mold the foam with their hands or tools.

# OOBLECK

## WHATS NEEDED:

- 1 cup cornstarch (cornflour)
- About ½ cup water (adjust for consistency)
- Food coloring (optional, a few drops)
- Mixing bowl
- Spoon or hands for mixing
- Airtight storage bin or container

## WHAT TO DO:

- Add cornstarch to the mixing bowl.
- Add water while stirring. Start with half a cup and adjust as needed.
- Mix in food coloring
- Check the texture: Press quickly → should feel solid
- Let it rest → should flow like a liquid

## BENEFITS:

- Engages touch, pressure, and movement awareness.
- Squeezing, pressing, rolling, and pinching strengthen hands and fingers.
- Kids learn about solids vs. liquids and cause/effect.
- Color mixing, patterns, and playful shapes.



## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Colors & Swirls:** Mix two colors in one batch for rainbow effects.
- **Flavors:** Add a few drops of vanilla, cocoa, or fruit essence (optional, edible).
- **Texture:** Mix in a teaspoon of sugar or powdered milk for a slightly gritty but edible twist.
- **Mini molds:** Shape into letters, animals, or holiday shapes using silicone molds.
- **Double batch:** Make in small portions for different colors to swirl together.

# RAINBOW SPAGHETTI

## WHATS NEEDED:

- Cooked spaghetti
- Food coloring
- Oil (optional, prevents sticking)
- Ziploc bags
- Plastic container for storage
- Optional: tongs, spoons, sprinkle-safe glitter, small toys for play

## WHAT TO DO:

- Divide cooked spaghetti into separate Ziploc bags.
- Add a few drops of food coloring to each bag.
- Add a tiny splash of oil (optional) and shake the bag until the color spreads.
- Leave for 5–10 minutes, then rinse lightly if needed.
- Place into a container and let the sensory fun begin!

## BENEFITS:

- Builds fine motor skills (pulling, squishing, scooping)
- Supports color recognition and sorting
- Encourages sensory exploration in a safe, edible way
- Helps with focus and calming through tactile play
- Boosts creativity and imaginative play



## HOW TO ADAPT:

- Babies/Toddlers: Keep longer noodles for easy gripping; skip the oil.
- Older Kids: Add scissors for snipping practice or create “spaghetti art.”
- Themed Play: Add toy insects, kitchen tools, or color-matching cups.
- Learning Focus: Use it for counting, patterning, or sorting by color.

# PUDDING PAINTING

## WHATS NEEDED:

- Pudding Mix (Any)
- Colouring

## TIPS:

Use clear cups or trays to layer colourful pudding—great for sensory fun, colour recognition, and pretend cooking play.

## WHAT TO DO:

- Make the pudding following the box instructions and let it set
- Divide into small bowls and add food coloring
- Let children mix and explore the colors
- Encourage squishing, painting, and sensory play
- Enjoy tasting as part of the activity

## BENEFITS:

- **Sensory Exploration:** Feel textures, colors, and consistency
- **Creativity:** Experiment with mixing and painting
- **Fine Motor Skills:** Smooshing and spreading improves hand control
- **Taste-Safe Fun:** Safe to explore with mouth as well
- **Engagement:** Keeps children interested and curious



## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Cake Icing Spatula** – Have the kids smooth the pudding.
- **Pizza Cutter** – Have the kids cut the Pudding
- **Whisk** – To make fun designs
- **Turner** – Move the Pudding to one side of the paper. See how many times it takes to move the Pudding from one side of the paper to the other.
- **Tongs** – Have them try to pick up the pudding with the tongs.
- **Potato Masher** – Use it to make designs, and you can also use it as a pudding stamp!

# YOGURT PAINTING

## WHATS NEEDED:

- Yogurt
- Food colouring
- Pots
- Paint brushes
- Paper

## NOTES:

- Paint is for single use only
- Do not store or reuse after play

## WHAT TO DO:

- Add a few drops of food coloring to the yogurt
- Stir continuously until the yogurt is evenly colored
- Adjust the number of drops for lighter or brighter shades
- Encourage children to watch the color change as they mix

## BENEFITS:

- Fine motor skills
- Stimulates nervous system
- Hand-to-eye coordination
- Helps creative development
- Boosts Confidence & Self-Esteem
- Helps young children to understand/express themselves.



## HOW TO ADAPT:

- Develop gross motor skills by getting the whole body involved and use hands and feet to paint.
- Add additional tools such as stamps and rollers
- Add other ingredients to enhance the sensory experience ie rice or cereal
- Paint other objects ie decorating cookies etc
- Another one that is great for fussy eaters.

# CEREAL SAND

## WHATS NEEDED:

- Cheerios (or other round cereal)
- Sensory tray
- Scoops, spoons, or small cups
- Small toys or objects for burying (optional: animals, cars, gems)

## WHAT TO DO:

- **Prepare cereal “sand”:** Crush the cereal in a blender until it reaches a sand-like texture.
- **Fill the tray:** Pour the crushed cereal into the sensory tray to create a “sand” base.
- **Add toys:** Bury small objects in the cereal for digging and discovery.
- **Play:** Encourage children to scoop, pour, dig, sort, or create shapes with the cereal.

## BENEFITS:

- **Sensory exploration:** Kids explore the texture, sound, and movement of dry cereal.
- **Fine motor skills:** Scooping, pouring, and picking up pieces strengthen fingers and hands.
- **Hand-eye coordination:** Digging, sorting, and transferring improve precision.
- **Creativity & imagination:** Children can build shapes, patterns, or small landscapes.



## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Mix cereals:** Combine different shapes or colors for visual and tactile variety.
- **Themed play:** Add dinosaurs, farm animals, or small vehicles for imaginative scenarios.
- **Tools challenge:** Introduce tweezers, spoons, or funnels to boost fine motor skills.
- **Color and pattern:** Use food coloring on cereal (optional) for colorful sand play.
- **Texture mix:** Add dry rice, pasta, or beads for additional sensory contrast.

# CHIA SLIME

## WHATS NEEDED:

- 1/4 cup chia seeds
- 1 3/4 cups water
- Food coloring (optional)
- 1/2–1 cup cornstarch

## WHAT TO DO:

- Mix chia seeds, water, and food coloring. Soak overnight in fridge.
- Mix in cornstarch until it's a gooey, slime-like texture.

## BENEFITS:

- Sensory-Rich: Gooey, squishy texture stimulates touch and exploration.
- Squeezing, stretching, and scooping builds hand strength.
- Calming Play: The soft texture and slow movement can be soothing and regulate emotions.

## NOTES:

Soak Overnight: Let chia seeds fully absorb water (6–8 hours) to avoid grainy texture.




## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Color Fun:** Add food coloring to the water before soaking chia seeds for bright, kid-friendly slime.
- **Texture Twist:** Mix in edible glitter or a bit of cornstarch for a thicker, stretchier feel.
- **Cool Sensory Play:** Chill the slime before play for a new sensory temperature experience.
- **Themed Play:** Match colors to themes (e.g., red for lava, blue for ocean slime, green for monster goo).

# COCONUT SNOW

## WHATS NEEDED:

- 2–3 cups desiccated coconut
- Tray or shallow container
- Optional: small scoops, cups, cookie cutters, winter-themed toys
- Optional: food coloring for tinted “snow”

## WHAT TO DO:

- Pour desiccated coconut into a tray or shallow container.
- Add optional food coloring if desired.
- Encourage children to scoop, pat, and mold the coconut into shapes or patterns.
- Add small toys or tools for extra imaginative play.

## BENEFITS:

- **Sensory Exploration:** Safe, snow-like texture to touch and manipulate
- **Fine Motor Skills:** Scooping and molding strengthens hand muscles
- **Creativity & Imagination:** Encourages themed and imaginative play
- **Adaptable:** Can add colors, toys, or other materials for variety




## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Colored Snow** – Mix in food coloring for rainbow snow fun.
- **Hidden Treasures** – Bury small toys or beads for a sensory scavenger hunt.
- **Themed Play** – Snowmen, winter animals, or Arctic scenes.
- **Combine Textures** – Add oats, rice, or glitter for extra sensory variety.
- **Add Scents** – Mix in vanilla or coconut essence for enhanced sensory engagement.

# MARSHMALLOW DOUGH

## WHATS NEEDED:

- Marshmallows (large or mini)
- Powdered sugar or cornflour (to prevent sticking)
- Microwave-safe bowl or heat source
- Spoon or spatula
- Optional: food coloring, cookie cutters, rolling pin, safe tools for shaping

## WHAT TO DO:

- Place marshmallows in a microwave-safe bowl.
- Heat for 15–30 seconds until soft (not melted completely).
- Add a small amount of powdered sugar or cornflour to make it easier to handle.
- Knead carefully—if sticky, dust hands and surface with more powdered sugar.
- Add a few drops of food coloring if desired and knead until evenly mixed.

## BENEFITS:

- Kids explore texture, stickiness, and squishiness.
- Rolling, pinching, and shaping strengthens hands and fingers.
- Kids can mold shapes, pretend foods, or small figures.
- Observing how marshmallows melt and change with heat introduces cause-and-effect.




## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Edible Sculptures** – Shape letters, numbers, or animals for a learning twist.
- **Themed Play** – Freeze holiday or seasonal colors into the playdough.
- **Add Texture** – Sprinkle in rice, cereal, or glitter (non-toxic) for sensory variety.
- **Mini Playdough Tools** – Cookie cutters, small rolling pins, or plastic knives add more fine motor challenges.

# FLOUR DOUGH

## WHATS NEEDED:

- 1/4 cup flour
- 1 cup cold water
- Food coloring

## WHAT TO DO:

- Mix flour and water in a saucepan.
- Cook on medium heat until it thickens.
- Cool and divide into containers. Add food coloring.

## BENEFITS:

- **Sensory Exploration:** Engages sight, touch, and sometimes taste—boosts sensory development.
- **Creative Expression:** Encourages color mixing, painting, and open-ended art.
- **Motor Skills:** Finger painting improves hand-eye coordination and fine motor control.



## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Color Variety:** Use food coloring or natural dyes (like beet juice, turmeric, or spinach water).
- **Texture Play:** Add oats, rice cereal, or sprinkles for a multi-textured experience.
- **Temperature Play:** Use warm or cool paint to explore temperature differences.
- **Squeeze Bottles:** Thicken slightly and let kids squeeze it out for pre-writing practice.

# MILK POWDER CLOUD

## WHATS NEEDED:

- 2–3 cups milk powder
- Tray or shallow container
- Optional: small scoops, cups, cookie cutters, or toys
- Optional: food coloring for tinted “clouds”

## WHAT TO DO:

- Pour milk powder into a tray or shallow container.
- Add optional food coloring if desired.
- Encourage children to scoop, pat, and mold the milk powder.
- Add small toys or tools for extra imaginative play.

## BENEFITS:

- Soft, powdery texture feels like real snow.
- Scooping, patting, and shaping strengthens hands and fingers.
- Kids can build snowmen, shapes, or winter scenes.
- The light, fluffy texture encourages gentle, focused exploration.
- Safe & Edible
- Encourages experimentation with volume, texture & patterns.




## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Colored Clouds** – Mix in a few drops of food coloring for rainbow fun.
- **Hidden Treasures** – Bury small toys or objects for a sensory scavenger hunt.
- **Themed Play** – Snow scenes, clouds, or weather-themed setups.
- **Combine Textures** – Layer with rice, oats, or small beads for mixed sensory play.
- **Scented Play** – Add a few drops of vanilla or cocoa powder for extra sensory input

# MOON SAND/CLOUD DOUGH

## WHATS NEEDED:

- Flour
- Cooking oil
- Tray or sensory bin
- Scoops, cups, spoons, molds, or toy vehicles (optional)
- Food coloring, small toys, scoops, molds, or containers (optional)
- Large mixing bow

## WHAT TO DO:

- Add 8 cups flour to a tray or bowl.
- Slowly mix in 1 cup cooking oil.
- Rub together with hands until it feels soft, crumbly, and moldable.
- Pour into a tray, add tools, and play!

## BENEFITS:

- Soft, crumbly texture engages touch and supports calming play.
- cooping, squeezing, and molding strengthen little hands.
- Open-ended play encourages imagination and pretend scenes.
- Builds early math concepts like volume, cause-and-effect, and comparing sizes.




## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Add Colors:** Use food coloring or natural dyes for rainbow cloud dough.
- **Hidden Objects:** Bury small toys for a “treasure hunt.”
- **Themed Play:** Castles, dinosaurs, or snow-themed setups.
- **Scented Dough:** Add vanilla, peppermint, or essential oils (kid-safe) for extra sensory fun.
- **Combine Textures:** Sprinkle in rice, beads, or sand for mixed sensory exploration.

# ICE SENSORY ACTIVITY

## WHATS NEEDED:

- Large ice blocks (freeze water in a container or mold overnight)
- Plastic or toy hammers (safe for children)
- Tray
- Optional additions: small toys frozen inside the ice, food coloring, glitter

## WHAT TO DO:

- Freeze water in a large container to make a block of ice.
- Place the ice block on a tray or shallow container.
- Provide children with a toy hammer.
- Demonstrate how to gently tap or hit the ice to break it into pieces.
- Let them explore breaking ice, freeing any toys inside, and experimenting with different techniques.

## BENEFITS:

- Kids feel the cold, smooth ice and hear it crack under the hammer.
- Using a hammer develops hand strength, coordination & precision.
- Children see how hitting ice breaks it into pieces.
- Kids figure out the best way to break ice or free objects trapped inside.
- Science & Observation – Learn about melting, freezing & the difference in textures.



## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Freeze toys or letters inside** – kids can “rescue” them as they break the ice.
- **Add color** – use colored water for a rainbow effect as ice cracks.
- **Salt experiment – sprinkle salt and observe how it speeds up melting.**
- **Themed play** – Arctic animals, Frozen movie characters, or treasure hunts.
- **Different hammers** – soft mallets or wooden spoons for younger children.

# CORNSTARCH PAINTING

## WHATS NEEDED:

- Cornstarch
- Water
- Natural food colouring or fruit/vegetable juices
- Small containers or a palette
- Brushes, cotton swabs, or fingers for painting
- Thick paper or cardboard

## WHAT TO DO:

- Mix 1 tbsp cornstarch with 1 tbsp water in small cups.
- Add a few drops of natural food colouring or juice.
- Stir until smooth and colourful.
- Use brushes or fingers to paint on thick paper.
- Let dry and enjoy

## BENEFITS:

- Open-ended artistic expression.
- Engages sight, touch, and sometimes smell.
- Great for colour recognition and pre-writing skills.
- Holding tools strengthens hand muscles.
- Calming activity – Soothing and focused playtime.



## HOW TO ADAPT:

- Use brushes, sponges, or cotton buds.
- Paint on paper, cardboard, or fabric.
- Try finger painting for tactile fun.
- Use natural dyes like beet juice or turmeric.
- Mix in scents like vanilla or lemon.

# EDIBLE MUD

## WHATS NEEDED:

- Cocoa powder
- Water, milk, or yoghurt
- Crushed biscuits or oats (optional)
- Bowl and spoon

## NOTES:

There's no right way to play — touching, tasting, mixing, or observing are all valuable.

## WHAT TO DO:

- Add ingredients to a bowl
- Slowly mix until a thick, muddy texture forms
- Adjust consistency: thicker for scooping, thinner for pouring
- Encourage children to explore and manipulate the mixture

## BENEFITS:

- **Sensory Exploration:** Safe way to explore textures
- **Curiosity & Discovery:** Encourages trying new textures
- **Fine Motor Development:** Mixing, scooping, and handling improves hand skills
- **Regulation:** Can be calming and soothing for young children



**TASTE SAFE**

## HOW TO ADAPT:

- Start with tools (spoon, cup) if touching feels tricky
- Change the texture by adding more or less liquid
- Use fingers, hands, or let the child simply watch
- Add small toys for scooping, hiding, or pretend play

# FROZEN VEGGIES

## WHATS NEEDED:

- Mixed veggies (boiled, cooled, then frozen) — peas, corn, carrots, or any soft-cooked mix
- Large sensory tray or bin
- Cups, bowls, spoons, ladles, tongs, scoops
- Small jug of warm water (optional)
- Play kitchen tools or animal figures (optional)

## WHAT TO DO:

- Pour the frozen veggies into sensory tray.
- Add tools: Place cups, scoops, tongs, and bowls around the tray.
- Play: Kids sort, scoop, cook, dig, and explore the chilled textures.
- Optional melting fun: Offer warm water in small amounts for melting and softening.

## BENEFITS:

- Scooping, grabbing, pouring, and sorting
- Encourages language development (cold, melt, smooth, hard, crunchy)
- Supports scientific exploration as children observe temperature and texture changes
- Promotes imaginative play like cooking, shopping, and gardening



## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Sorting station:** Set out coloured bowls for grouping veggies by type or colour.
- **Chef play:** Add pans, pots, plates, and pretend café menus.
- **Frozen treasure:** Freeze veggies inside ice cubes for cracking and melting exploration.
- **Counting game:** Ask children to count scoops, veggies, or match numbers to bowls.
- **Toddler version:** Use larger scoops and skip the tongs.

# JELLY DIG

## WHATS NEEDED:

- Jelly
- Small toys or objects to dig out (plastic animals, coins, shells, beads, etc.)
- Sensory tray
- Scoops, spoons, or tongs (optional)
- Towels or wipes for clean-up

## WHAT TO DO:

- Prepare the jelly: Follow packet instructions and pour into the tray. Let it fully set.
- Add objects: Once the jelly is set, press small toys or safe objects into it.
- Play: Kids can dig, scoop, and extract objects with hands or tools.

## BENEFITS:

- Kids experience slippery, wobbly, and squishy textures.
- Digging, grasping, & picking up objects strengthen hands & fingers.
- Locating and extracting objects improves precision.
- Creativity & imagination: Kids can create stories or “rescue” scenarios with hidden objects.



## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Colors & layers:** Make multi-colored jelly layers for visual appeal.
- **Themed objects:** Use dinosaurs, sea creatures, or seasonal items.
- **Add scents:** Use flavored jelly for taste-safe sensory play.
- **Tools challenge:** Introduce tongs or spoons for extra fine motor practice.
- **Combine textures:** Add small beads, rice, or oats for contrast.

# COLORED BREAD CRUMBS

## WHATS NEEDED:

- Slices of bread
- Food coloring
- Milk (just a little for mixing color)
- Food processor or blender
- Sensory tray
- Scoops, spoons, cups, or small toys for play

## WHAT TO DO:

- Add a few drops of food coloring to a splash of milk and stir.
- Lightly brush or dip bread into the colored milk (don't oversoak).
- Let the bread dry completely—air dry or oven for quicker drying.
- Once dry, place bread in a food processor and pulse until crumbly.
- Pour the colorful crumbs into the sensory tray.

## BENEFITS:

- Sensory exploration
- Soft, crumbly textures and bright colors engage multiple senses.
- Fine motor skills
- Creativity & imagination: Kids create patterns, "landscapes," and colorful mixes.
- Safe, edible play
- Color recognition & early science: Mixing colors and watching bread transform builds early learning.



## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Color themes:** Rainbow trays, holiday colors, or pastels for a calm setup.
- **Texture mix:** Combine coarse and fine crumbs for extra sensory interest.
- **Hide-and-seek play:** Bury small toys or objects to dig out.
- **Color sorting:** Make separate colors and let kids sort or mix them.
- **Add scents:** Use a drop of vanilla or cocoa powder for a gentle aroma.

# GLOOPY MUD

## WHATS NEEDED:

- 3 packets of cornstarch
- Water
- Cocoa powder
- Mixing bowl or large container
- Large Tub
- Spoon or hands for mixing

## WHAT TO DO:

- Mix dry: Combine cornstarch and cocoa powder (2–3 tbsp per packet).
- Add water: Pour slowly, stirring until thick and squishy.
- Press quickly → should feel solid
- Let it flow slowly → should ooze like mud
- Play: Pour into a tray for squishing, scooping, and stamping.

## BENEFITS:

- **Sensory Exploration:** Squishy, gooey texture engages touch and curiosity
- **Creativity & Imagination:** Encourages open-ended, hands-on play
- **Early Science Concepts:** Explores properties of solids and liquids
- **Fine Motor Skills:** Pouring, mixing, and squishing strengthens hands
- **Adaptable:** Can add textures, toys, or scents for variety and learning



## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Colors:** Add food coloring to create “colored mud” (green, blue, etc.) for themed sensory play.
- **Textures:** Mix in oats, rice, or crushed cereal for a lumpy mud effect.
- **Scented mud:** Add vanilla or cocoa essence for a stronger smell.
- **Mini props:** Small toy animals, leaves, or pebbles turn it into a mud habitat.
- **Different trays:** Try a shallow tray for spreading or a deep tub for “digging.”

# CHOCOLATE PUDDING MUD

## WHATS NEEDED:

- Chocolate pudding (store-bought or homemade)
- Oreos (crushed, for “dirt” texture)
- Gummy worms or other edible “bugs”
- Sensory tray or shallow storage container
- Toys: construction vehicles, small animals, insects, scoops, spoons, or cups

## WHAT TO DO:

- Pour chocolate pudding into the sensory tray.
- Sprinkle crushed cerial on top to create a realistic mud layer.
- Include construction vehicles, animals, or insects for imaginative play.

## BENEFITS:

- **Sensory:** Squishy, sticky, and textured materials engage touch, sight, and curiosity
- **Fine Motor:** Scooping, pinching, and digging strengthen hand-eye coordination
- **Imagination:** Children create “construction sites,” “dirt worlds,” or other imaginative scenes
- **Safe Taste:** Exploration: Provides a taste-safe sensory experience for younger children



## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Themes:** Use colored pudding or sprinkles for seasonal or holiday sensory play.
- **Textures:** Mix in rice, oats, or crushed cereal for extra crunch.
- **Mini props:** Small figures, shells, or rocks for themed landscapes.
- **Interactive games:** Hide gummy worms or toys for “dig and discover” fun.
- **Layering:** Create strata of pudding, dirt (Oreos), and other edible items for visual appeal.

# RICE KRISPIES

## WHATS NEEDED:

- Rice Krispies
- A sensory tray
- Scoops, cups, spoons, funnels
- Small toys for hiding and digging
- Spray bottle filled with water
- Optional: food colouring + a little oil if you want to colour the Krispies

## WHAT TO DO:

- Pour Rice Krispies into your tray to make the sensory base.
- Add scoops, cups, spoons, funnels, and the spray bottle.
- Bury small objects for children to discover.
- Encourage kids to scoop, pour, crunch, dig, and spray the Krispies to explore how they soften and change texture.

## BENEFITS:

- Strengthens fine motor skills and hand muscles through scooping, pouring, pinching, and spraying
- Encourages imaginative, open-ended play
- Offers a crunchy, crackly sensory experience
- Supports early math concepts like measuring, comparing, and volume



## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Colour play:** Colour the Krispies by mixing with food colouring and a teaspoon of oil, then let them dry.
- **Theme trays:** Construction site with trucks, dinosaur dig, bakery setup, ocean treasure hunt.
- **Mix-in textures:** Add mini marshmallows, pasta spirals, or pom-poms for variety.
- **Toddler-friendly:** Skip small toys and focus on scooping and spraying.
- **Water exploration:** Offer the spray bottle for gentle squirting—kids LOVE seeing the Krispies transform from crunchy to mushy.

# HOT COCOA GLOOP

## WHATS NEEDED:

- Hot cocoa powder, water & cornstarch
- Marshmallows
- Bowls, cups, mugs, scoops, spoons
- Sensory tray
- Optional add-ins: chocolate chips, cinnamon sticks, pom-poms, brown rice, funnels, pretend café tools, whisks

## WHAT TO DO:

- Pour cocoa powder and mix with cornstarch
- Add accessories like scoops, cups, spoons, and mugs
- Add marshmallows, chocolate chips, or pom-poms as mix-ins.
- Children scoop, pour, stir, make pretend drinks, and mix ingredients.

## BENEFITS:

- Encourages imaginative play and role-playing
- Builds fine motor skills
- Supports early math concepts like measuring & comparing quantities
- Rich multi-sensory experience—smell, touch, sound, and visual exploration
- Promotes vocabulary building (mix, scoop, sprinkle, pour,  soft etc)



## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Snowy cocoa:** Add a second tray of flour or cornstarch as "snow" to mix in.
- **Café setup:** Add order pads, menus, and play money for role-play.
- **Colour variation:** Use brown rice instead of cocoa for a mess-friendly base.
- **Scent boost:** Add a tiny sprinkle of cinnamon for a cozy aroma.
- **Toddler-friendly:** Skip small items like chocolate chips and use large pom-poms instead.

# CHOCOLATE CLOUD DOUGH

## WHATS NEEDED:

- 2 cups flour
- 1/2 cup cocoa powder
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil

## NOTES:

Protect Surfaces: Cocoa can stain—use a tray or play mat.

## WHAT TO DO:

- In a large bowl, mix flour and cocoa powder.
- Slowly add oil and mix with your hands or a spoon.
- Adjust with a bit more oil or flour until it feels like soft, moldable sand (not sticky).

## BENEFITS:

- **Sensory Exploration:** Soft, moldable texture and chocolate scent engage touch and smell
- **Fine Motor Skills:** Scooping, shaping, and pressing strengthens hands and fingers
- **Creativity & Imagination:** Encourages imaginative play and storytelling
- **Adaptable:** Can add tools, textures, or different scents for variety




## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Pretend Play:** Add cookie cutters, cupcake liners, and muffin trays.
- **Texture Play:** Mix in oats, coffee grounds, or sugar sprinkles for crunch
- **Color Variations:** Mix with colored flour to create "vanilla" or "strawberry" versions.
- **Chalk Dust:** Use edible drink mix powders (like Nesquik) for different scents/flavors.

# YOGHURT & CORN FLOUR GLOOP

## WHATS NEEDED:

- 1 cup cornflour (cornstarch)
- ½–1 cup yoghurt (plain or flavored)
- Tray or shallow container for sensory play
- Optional: food coloring, spoons, cups, small toys for exploration
- Optional: mat or newspaper for easy cleanup

## WHAT TO DO:

- Pour cornflour into a tray
- Add yoghurt, mixing as you go, until it forms a thick, squishy gloop.
- Adjust consistency: more cornflour for thicker, more solid gloop; more yoghurt for runnier gloop.
- Add optional food colouring for extra visual fun.
- Let kids explore: squeeze, stir, and experiment with the texture.

## BENEFITS:

- **Sensory Exploration:** Squishy, gooey texture engages touch and curiosity
- **Fine Motor Skills:** Mixing, pouring, and squishing strengthens hand muscles
- **Creativity & Imagination**: Encourages experimenting with textures, colors, and patterns
- **Safe Taste Experience:** Edible and safe for young children




## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Colorful Fun –** Add drops of food coloring to create swirling rainbow gloop.
- **Hidden Objects –** Bury small toys or shapes for a sensory treasure hunt.
- **Themed Play –** Pretend cooking, mud pies, or science experiments.
- **Tools & Utensils –** Add spoons, droppers, or scoops for fine motor practice.
- **Scented Gloop –** Use vanilla, lemon, or cinnamon-flavored yoghurt for extra sensory input.

# ICE PAINTING

## WHATS NEEDED:

- Ice cube trays
- Water
- Food colouring (or liquid watercolours)
- Paper (thicker paper works best to prevent warping)
- Tray or plate to contain drips
- Optional: small toys, glitter, or salt for added texture

## WHAT TO DO:

- Mix water with food colouring and pour into ice cube trays. Freeze until solid.
- Place a piece of paper on a tray to catch drips.
- Remove coloured ice cubes and encourage children to “paint” on the paper as the ice melts.
- Observe how the colours spread, blend, and change as the ice melts.
- Discuss what is happening to the ice and how it transforms from solid to liquid.

## BENEFITS:

- **Cause-and-Effect Learning:** Children see how the ice melts and moves across the paper, connecting actions to outcomes.
- **Science Exploration:** Introduces concepts like temperature, states of matter (solid to liquid), and melting.
- **Fine Motor Skills:** Holding and manipulating ice cubes strengthens grip and hand-eye coordination.
- **Sensory Play:** The cold sensation of ice adds a tactile element to painting.
- Creativity & Expression



## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Age-Friendly:** Bigger ice for toddlers, smaller or shaped ice for older kids.
- **Indoor/Outdoor:** Outdoors for messy fun; indoors with trays to catch melting water.
- **Themed Colors & Shapes:** Holiday colors, seasonal pastels, or fun molds like stars and hearts.
- **Different Surfaces:** Paper, cardstock, fabric, or windows for creative effects.
- **Mixed Media:** Combine with stamping, sponges, or layered colors for texture.

# COOL WHIP PAINTING

## WHATS NEEDED:

- 1 can of Cool Whip (thawed)
- Food coloring (liquid or gel works best)
- Optional: Glitter (safe for children), small cups, spoons, or paintbrushes
- A tray or shallow container to contain the mess
- Paper or plastic mat for easy cleanup
- Optional: Apron or old clothes

## WHAT TO DO:

- Scoop the Cool Whip into a tray. Spread it evenly.
- Add a few drops of food coloring. Swirl gently with fingers or a spoon to create marbled colors—or mix fully for a uniform color.
- Let your child explore! They can use fingers, brushes, or even toy stamps to “paint.”
- For paper art, press a piece of cardstock onto the paint, lift, and let it air dry.

## BENEFITS:

- Kids explore textures, temperature, and movement with their hands.
- Scraping, patting, and mixing strengthens hand muscles and coordination.
- The soft, creamy texture is oddly soothing—great for emotional regulation.
- Safe & Edible Option – Even if they taste a bit, it’s non-toxic and harmless



## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Themed Colors:** Use holiday or seasonal colors (green/red for Christmas, orange/purple for Halloween).
- **Add Scents:** A drop of vanilla or lemon extract makes it extra sensory.
- **Learning Twist:** Use it for letter or number tracing; write in the Cool Whip for a fun educational twist.
- **Outdoor Version:** Do it on a picnic table or sidewalk—less stress about mess!

# PORRIDGE PATTING

## WHATS NEEDED:

- Plain oats, cooked with water and cooled completely
- A white round tray or shallow container
- A washable mat or towel
- Optional: large spoons, silicone spatulas and small bowls
- Optional: old clothes or an apron

## WHAT TO DO:

- Prepare the porridge and allow it to cool completely. Check the temperature before offering it.
- Spread a thin layer across part of the tray, leaving some clear space.
- Let your child investigate with their hands or a spoon.
- Pat gently, squish, spread and draw trails through the porridge.
- Add a bowl for scooping, filling and emptying.
- Follow their ideas—there is no finished picture to make.

## BENEFITS:

- Sensory exploration: offers a soft, sticky texture to investigate.
- Hand coordination: provides practice with patting, grasping and scooping.
- Cause and effect: shows how pressing and spreading change the porridge.
- Language: creates opportunities for words such as “sticky”, “smooth”, “scoop” and “splat”.
- Choice and confidence: lets children decide how they want to join in.



## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **For babies ready for solids:** offer a small amount of smooth porridge without extra loose parts. Supervise closely.
- **For toddlers:** add large spoons and bowls for transferring and pretend cooking.
- **For older children:** make tracks, patterns or a pretend porridge café.
- For children unsure about sticky textures: offer a spoon or spatula and allow them to watch first.
- **Extend the play:** offer a thicker and a thinner portion to compare.

# SOFT PASTA DISCOVERY

## WHATS NEEDED:

- Plain pasta, such as penne or spirals
- Water for cooking
- A white round tray or shallow container
- Large spoons and small, sturdy bowls
- A washable mat or towel
- Optional: old clothes or an apron

## WHAT TO DO:

- Cook the pasta until soft, drain and cool completely.
- Spread a small amount across the tray, leaving space to explore.
- Let your child touch, pat, squeeze and move the pasta at their own pace.
- Add a spoon and bowl for scooping, filling and emptying.
- Follow their ideas—they might mix, arrange or pretend to cook.
- Use simple words naturally: “soft”, “slippery”, “squeeze” and “scoop”.

## BENEFITS:

- Sensory exploration: introduces soft, slippery textures and different shapes.
- Fine motor practice: offers opportunities to grasp, squeeze and release.
- Coordination: practises moving pasta with hands and tools.
- Cause and effect: explores how squeezing changes the pasta.
- Imagination and language: creates opportunities for pretend cooking and conversation.



## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **For babies ready for solids:** use very soft pasta prepared in a shape and size appropriate for their eating skills. Offer a small amount and supervise closely.
- For toddlers: add two bowls for transferring and pretend serving.
- **For older children:** create a pretend pasta café or explore patterns with different shapes.
- **For children unsure about the texture:** offer a spoon and allow them to watch before joining.

# WATER SPLASH

## WHATS NEEDED:

- A white round tray or shallow container
- A small amount of comfortably lukewarm water
- Large cups, spoons and a small jug
- A towel and non-slip washable mat
- Optional: a clean sponge or large, age-appropriate floating toy

## WHAT TO DO:

- Place the tray securely on the floor over a non-slip mat.
- Add a shallow layer of water and check its temperature.
- Let your child explore with their hands—patting, swirling and splashing.
- Offer a cup for scooping, filling and emptying.
- Add a jug for pouring if they show interest.
- Follow their ideas and describe what you notice: “You made ripples!” or “The cup is empty.”

## BENEFITS:

- Sensory exploration: offers opportunities to notice temperature, movement and sound.
- Coordination: practises scooping, pouring and controlling tools.
- Cause and effect: explores how hand movements create splashes and ripples.
- Early problem-solving: investigates filling, emptying and transferring.
- Language: creates opportunities for words such as “wet”, “full”, “empty” and “splash”.



## HOW TO ADAPT:

- **For babies who sit steadily:** offer a little water and one large cup, with an adult beside them.
- **For toddlers:** add two containers for transferring water.
- **For older children:** introduce funnels or compare how much different cups hold.
- **For children unsure about wet textures:** offer a spoon or cup so they can explore without putting their hands in.

# TASTE SAFE ACTIVITIES

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Slow, calm sensory experiences for babies and young children

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