

A close-up photograph of a hand covered in thick, colorful sensory paint. The paint is primarily green, with streaks of pink and yellow. The hand is reaching into a bowl filled with more of this colorful paint. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

SENSORY

FUN

50 Ideas that need  
almost NO prep

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# 50 NO PREP IDEAS FOR SENSORY PLAY ACTIVITIES

Don't you just love sensory play!

It's magical stuff that can get a child smiling even in the grottiest of moods.

Stompy angry kids are calmed. Bored whingers utterly absorbed. And even very little ones are happy to give you 10 minutes space to make tea.

And ... a big AND ... it is seriously NO prep!

Of course sensory play can be fancy and you can prep all sorts of stuff if you have time.

But on those days ... like most! ... when I'm back footed and winging it simple no prep sensory play is my best friend. Just grab a tub, tray, box, bowl, jar, bag, board, sauce pan, colander ... whatever ... and add stuff.

Stuff that can be pulled and stretched and scrunched and rubbed and poured and stirred and splodged and shaken and rattled and so so much more ...

Sometimes the sensory play morphs into other imaginative play or "science" or cooking or sticking or even maths, but mostly it's just enough to have the textures, smells, sounds and even tastes!

- |   |                                 |   |
|---|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. Sand   | 18. Fake snow                   | 36. Worms – yes, again<br>real ones!                    |
| 2. Rice   | 19. "Moon sand"*                | 37. Magnets with<br>magnetic & non-<br>magnetic objects |
| 3. Jelly  | 20. Coffee beans                | 38. Letters   |
| 4. Mud  | 21. Ice cubes                   | 39. Colours   |
| 5. Dry pasta  | 22. Leaves                      | 40. Dinosaurs   |
| 6. Flour & water ... it<br>might end up as play<br>dough, but it might<br>not | 23. Rocks                       | 41. Bear hunt*  |
| 7. Paint  | 24. Flowers                     | 42. Farm animals  |
| 8. Shaving foam   | 25. Shells                      | 43. Insects   |
| 9. Water beads  | 26. Sticks                      | 44. Sea side  |
| 10. Dish washing bubbles  | 27. Beads                       | 45. Oceans  |
| 11. Cooked spaghetti  | 28. Acorns                      | 46. Pirate treasure                                     |
| 12. Tissue paper  | 29. Sequins                     | 47. Boats   |
| 13. Shiny paper   | 30. Buttons                     | 48. Shredded colour<br>paper or "grass"                 |
| 14. Furry material  | 31. Feathers                    | 49. Sensory balloons*                                   |
| 15. Pop corn  | 32. Marbles                     | 50. Slime   |
| 16. Bubble wrap   | 33. Old or plastic<br>jewellery |   |
| 17. Sawdust   | 34. Conkers                     |   |
|   | 35. Snails – yes, real<br>ones! |   |

**\*The recipes for highlighted items are overleaf**

## Physical games and activities.

1. Activity centres (Crash bang wallop, Wacky warehouse)
2. Animals
3. Beads/ threading
4. Board games
5. Books/ story sacks/ magazines
6. Bouncy chairs/ bean bags (all sizes)
7. Card games
8. Chalk and boards
9. Collage making
10. Competitions
11. Construction bricks/ kits
12. Cooking
13. Dolls
14. Drawing- cutting and sticking
15. Dressing up/ fantasy
16. Garage/cars
17. Garden tools for digging/ exploring outside/ forest school
18. Home corner/ play house
19. Jigsaws/ puzzles
42. pans etc.)
43. Tool kit
44. Top trumps
20. Junk/ boxes
21. Knitting
22. Language games
23. Lego
24. Matching/ sorting/ hoops
25. Memory games
26. Music and rhythm (songs, poems)
27. Outdoor play equipment
28. Paint
29. Photo club
30. Physical climbing
31. Puppets
32. Roller skates
33. Shape sorters
34. Shaving foam
35. Skipping/ ball games
36. Strategy games
37. Swimming
38. Tactile toys
39. Team games
40. Tea-sets
41. Things from home (pots
45. Toy cars/ garages
46. Trains

# Recipes

## Sensory balloons

To make **sensory balloons** you will need:

- Balloons (different colours work best)
- Playdough
- Pasta shapes
- Rice
- Granulated Sugar
- Anything else you want to put inside; some ideas: flour, water or gel (if you're brave), lentils, beans, salt, sand.

## Bear Hunt Activity Tray

There is a story book that accompanies this activity if you would like to introduce it at bedtime as an introduction or continuation of the activity.

Make a sensory tray with the different elements of the story included for children to play and experiment with. Add things such as:

- Pebbles (gel, chick peas or pebbles from the garden)
- Grass (fake or real)
- Water tub or cling film
- Mud or chocolate mousse
- Fake trees (made from sticks, twigs, paper tubes, lolly sticks etc.)
- Fake snow

Have children talk about the sensory experiences and use the language that accompanies it. E.g. "thick oozy mud!" How does it feel? Encouraging children to use all their senses will help them with their **descriptive language**.



## **Moon Sand**

The recipe is simple:

- 8 cups of flour
- 1 cup of oil (we used baby oil).

Mix it up really well until all of the oil is incorporated into the flour. It will still look like flour (albeit full of teeny tiny lumps from the bits of oil), but it is mouldable just like **Moon Sand!**

- Add a tablespoon or two of powdered tempera paint, powdered water colour, or powdered chalk if you just want to add colour.
- Add in a few teaspoons or tablespoons of glitter to give your sand some extra powder.
- Add in a sprinkle of spices, such as pumpkin pie, apple pie, vanilla sugar, cocoa, or cinnamon if you want to give your moon sand a nice smell.

**Store in an air-tight container.** Moon sand does keep for a solid month or two, but you'll probably find that you want to make more anyway before the first batch gets old. But until then, store this batch in an air-tight container in a cool, dry place, like your pantry or in a child's toy box.

- When you go to pull it back out for playtime round two, revive it with a couple tablespoons of water. It will come back to life and be just as good as new.

