



Activities for Tactile Exploration

It is important to keep in mind that if your child is sensitive to textures and touch, NEVER force him/her to engage in tactile play as this can cause more anxiety and withdrawal from tactile play experiences. Make this type of play available on a frequent basis and entice the child to at least watch as you and/or a sibling or a friend while you play. As your child observes comment on how much fun you are having and over time your child will be brave enough to try and join in the fun!

- Play with shaving cream either in the bathtub or on a cookie sheet. You can pretend it is snow and drive toy cars through the mess, or any other small toys. Use a paint brush to paint the walls of the tub or to paint different parts of your body.
- Make your own hand fidget- use a balloon (or two balloons one inside the other if your child squeezes tight), and use a funnel to fill it with sand, salt, birdseed, flour or rice. Squeeze out the extra air and tie it shut. You can use it as a hand fidget or you can use it to stamp it in paint to make designs on paper. You could also play "Hot Potato" with the fidget toy.
- Make your own finger paint- get an old muffin tin and put a small amount of white shampoo in the cups. Put one or two drops of food coloring in each cup with the shampoo and mix it with a Q-tip. Take a cookie sheet with butcher paper on it and paint away! You can try mixing the colors to make new colors. To add more texture to the paint mix a little sand or salt in with the shampoo.
- Make edible finger paint for the kid who just can't seem to stop putting everything in his/her mouth. Use plain yogurt or vanilla pudding and mix in a little food coloring (2 drops). Use an old muffin tin or Crystal Light drink mix cups to mix the "paint" in. Paint on a cookie sheet or serving tray.
- Make a tactile bin- fill a plastic container with beans, rice, birdseed or dried pasta. You can hide toys in the bin while your child tries to find them- eyes open and eyes closed. You can also use old measuring cups or cooking utensils for pretend play and fill-and-dump play.
- Make a "feely box"- cut a hole in the lid of a shoe box. Fill the shoe box with small items of different textures- spoons, marbles, small koosh balls, sticky things, etc. Have your child put their hand in the box and try to figure out what the item is before pulling their hand out
- Mix one cup of cornstarch and one cup of water. Add a couple drops of food coloring. Now you have a "muddy" looking substance that feels hard at first by turns into a liquid when





you let go. Mix food coloring to make brown mud that dinosaurs or monster trucks and go through.

- Fill a zip-lock bag with hair gel and reinforce with strong tape. Fill the bag enough so that it can lay flat. Encourage your child to squeeze it, poke it, and draw numbers, letters or pictures in it.
- Allow you child to play and smear glue during art projects
- Draw with chalk
- Finger paint on bubble wrap, plastic canvas or sandpaper under the drawing for added texture
- Fill your bathtub or sink with bubbles and let your child play in them or draw in the tub with foam soap or soap paint
- Encourage your child to walk barefoot over carpet, grass, sand etc. Go "ice skating" in shaving cream
- Paint body parts with washable paint, foam soap, shaving cream, powder, lotions etc. encourage your child to put the material on themselves
- Potting or planting activities, digging in soil, putting the soil in the pots, etc.
- Allow you child to help with cooking and baking. Encourage them to knead dough with clean hands or spread frosting
- "Draw" letters, numbers or shapes on your child's back and have them guess what you drew
- Deep pressure massages with lotion- it may be helpful to warm the lotion ahead of time which can be done by placing the lotion in a sink with hot water for several minutes before use. For kids with smell sensitivity, you may need to get unscented lotion
- Paper mache projects

Questions?

I am here to help! Contact Jamie via phone or email anytime!

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