

curious minds

Ages 1
and up



Sensory trays — exploring our senses

Create an sensory experience for your child to explore their sense of touch, taste, sight, sound and smell.

Learning benefit/skill development

- Develops children's sense of wonder by encouraging their 5 sensory exploration.
- Assists in children's understanding of different colours, textures and sounds.
- Encourages messy play to promote children's creative and adaptive play.
- Prompts exploration of senses
- Explores food in a non-pressured fun way

What you'll need

- Metal aluminium trays (bowls can be used too)
- Shredded coconut
- Coloured water
- Cooked pasta
- Rice
- Herbs and edible leaves
- Towels

Instructions

- Place one towel on top of the table and one towel underneath table (this will assist with clean-up)

- Place five trays on the table
- Fill each tray with your designated sensory item (be sure to place the dry sensory next to a wet sensory tray, this allows for a greater texture difference when exploring each tray one by one).

Extension of learning:

- Question your child on the taste, "Does that taste yummy or yucky?"
- Question your child on the feel, "Is that soft, hard, crunchy, cold, warm or sticky?"

Special consideration

Some children can be reluctant to touch or taste different textures or colours, this often is associated with their sensory preferences. We all have sensory preferences but if a child has sensory processing challenges, this can result in the textures or tastes being incredibly uncomfortable for children to interact with. By giving children choices between wet/soft and dry/crunchy, we are being more supportive of these children. When introducing a child to a less preferred texture it may be useful to start with using tools such as spoons or long paint brushes, or the first touch could be the tip of the finger. If introducing new food textures to taste, smell is a great starting point. Using cutlery with these foods and even giving the new food a kiss to start getting it closer to the mouth can all help towards exploring new taste.