

Sensory Development for Infants & Toddlers

Infants use their senses to learn about the world around them. Sensory stimulation is linked to emotional, cognitive and physical development. All of the senses need to work together so that infants and toddlers can move, learn and behave in a typical manner. Activities provided for seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting should be numerous and repetitive for proper sensory stimulation.

What kind of activities and materials provide sensory stimulation?

0-12 months:

Touch: texture mats, warm water play
See: close face to face interactions, books
Hear: talking with children, listening outdoors
Smell: scented lotions and oils
Taste: sucking on food, bottles and teething rings

Remember: Art is a Sensory activity for infants & toddlers.
The process is more important than the product!!

1-2 years:

Touch: gloves, books, creative experiences with finger paints
See: mirrors, other reflective surfaces
Hear: music playing, wind chimes
Smell: scratch n sniff books, items in environment (flowers, fabrics, etc.)
Taste: different foods

2-3 years:

Touch: art materials – brushes, sponges, stamps
See: books with pictures & print, sun catchers, see through color plates
Hear: rain sticks, games that involve listening (Hokey Pokey)
Smell: foods as they bake
Taste: cooked foods

Adapted from Dimensions of Early Childhood, Volume 35, Number 2. Activities and Materials That Promote Infant-Toddler Sensory Development.

Here are fun, simple sensory activities for Infants & Toddlers.

Foaming Bath Soap

Soap foam

Clear plastic/bubble wrap

- Bath soap for babies is available in foam. This soap can be colored and scented.
- Cover a low table with clear plastic or bubble wrap.
- Squirt the foam on the table for the infant to touch, mash and push around.
- Allow time for exploration. Do not rush the process.
- If soap foam gets in the infants' eyes, rinse with clear water.



**Collaborative for
CHILDREN**

Sticky Wall

Large cardboard box

Contact paper

Items to stick to wall: juice tops, plastic lids, cardboard pieces, disposable cups, plastic flowers, etc.

- Select a large cardboard box that is the appropriate height for mobile infants.
- Cover the outside of the box with contact paper.
- Securely attach contact paper, sticky side out, to the outside of the box.
- Collect a variety of items for the infant to stick to wall.
- Make sure all items do not pose a choking hazard.