



SENSORY PLAY IN EARLY YEARS

Sensory play refers to any type of play activity that stimulates the senses, such as touch, sight, sound, smell, and taste. It involves providing children with materials and opportunities to explore and engage with their senses in a safe and developmentally appropriate way.

Sensory play can involve a wide variety of materials and activities, such as sand, water, playdough, slime, sensory bins, sensory bottles, and more. It is often used in early childhood education settings, as it can help young children to develop their sensory and cognitive skills, as well as their creativity, problem-solving abilities, and social skills.

Sensory play can be beneficial for children of all ages and abilities, but it is particularly important for infants and toddlers, as it can help to support their early brain development and learning. It can also be used as a therapeutic tool for children with sensory processing disorders or other developmental challenges.

1. **Sight:** Sensory play can involve visual stimulation through colourful and contrasting materials, such as brightly coloured water, different coloured sensory bins or jars, or light tables. Visual sensory play can also include activities such as shadow play and exploring mirrors.
2. **Sound:** Sensory play can include activities that produce different types of sounds, such as musical instruments, noise-making toys, and even listening to the sounds of nature. Sensory bins filled with materials such as rice, beans, or water beads can also create unique sounds when they are poured or manipulated.
3. **Touch:** Sensory play is often associated with tactile stimulation, which involves exploring different textures and temperatures. Materials such as playdough, sand, water, and slime can all provide a range of tactile experiences, from soft and smooth to gritty and gooey.
4. **Smell:** Sensory play can involve exploring different scents through materials such as essential oils, herbs and spices, and scented playdough. This can help to develop a child's sense of smell and encourage them to explore and identify different scents.
5. **Taste:** While taste is not always included in sensory play due to safety concerns, there are still opportunities for children to explore different tastes through sensory play activities such as cooking or baking projects. Using safe and edible materials such as fruits and vegetables, spices, and other food items can provide opportunities for children to explore new tastes and textures.

