

Supporting Sensory Needs

<https://www.parent.com/4-sensory-activities-to-explore-with-your-kids/>

Your child might experience sensitivity to certain kinds of sensory input. This is often common among children who have been ill frequently or who need maximum assistance for movement, positioning, and self-care tasks. Your child's cognitive and communication delays might cause a failure to comprehend all parts of an environment and therefore become overly sensitive to their surroundings. Several supports are listed below:

1. **Encourage the same physical motions every day.** Using the same activity every day can help your child understand the routine and transition between activities. The repetition of activities, especially when they vary from movement to quiet, can help your child become more relaxed in the environment. Routines and transitions should be accompanied by your conversation and reassurance to prepare your child for activities. Use visuals to prepare your child for each part of daily routines.
2. **Involve your child in daily tactile sensory activities.** Unfamiliar sensory stimuli can cause a sensitive child to become nervous or fearful. Provide regular sensory activities such as washing and drying hands, playing with playdough, sand, and items in sensory bins.
3. **Introduce different sensory experiences to your child.** Introduction of new sounds, food, scents, and textures should be done gently and with preparation for the new experiences. New experiences should be introduced one at a time and with a multi-sensory approach. For example, when introducing a new food, allow your child to feel the food and smell the food before tasting.
4. **Consult and collaborate with your child's service providers** when considering making changes in the sensory input that they receive if the change might be upsetting to your child.

Sensory Bins



Help your child roll cars through sand. If sand is not available, flour or even torn paper can be substituted. Rolling cars on the plain surface of the bin or tray can be a learning experience for your child if you interact. Make it fun – make vroom noises, make cars go fast and slow, talk about what you are doing together. Stop, wait, and ask your child if he or she wants to do it some more. Wait for a response.



Use paper rolls to make ramps. Help your child roll puff balls or small toys down the ramps. Talk about the balls rolling down and into the cups. Move the cup and “uh oh” the ball hits the floor. “Where’s the cup? To expand the activity, help your child use tongs to pick up the objects. Don’t forget, your conversation with your child is important.



Use baby soap or baby shampoo to make “bubble bowls”. Help your child use different sizes of plastic bowls and cups to fill and dump the water. Help them make big and small splashes with the sudsy water. Take turns with your child using the cups and verbalize “let’s share, my turn, your turn.” Tell your child when you are “all done” and let your child help you use the cups and bowls to pour the water down the drain.

Sensory Bags and Bottles

<https://diaryofasocalmama.com/dollar-store-sensory-bags/>

Important: Supervise your child during play with sensory bags or bottles in case there is a spill. Watch for safety to help avoid having your child place items in his or her mouth.

Sensory bags are a fun activity to do with your child. They are a great way to entertain your infant, help them explore their senses, and encourage tummy time and fine motor manipulation for children. To make a sensory bag you simply add items to a Ziploc bag, suspend in hair gel or oil if you like, and seal them up with some duct tape to ensure nothing comes leaking out onto little hands.

There are just a few items that you'll have to have in order to make sensory bags. The essentials are:

- freezer size Ziploc bags or empty plastic water bottles
- duct tape
- hair gel (see below for other options)
- Fillers

If you can't find or don't have hair gel, you can make sensory bags about 1 cup of flour for 6 tablespoons of water. You can add food coloring if you'd like.

For fillers the sky is the limit. You can put anything you want in your bags. Just remember not to mix metal items with liquid or you'll end up with a rusty mess. Here are some filler ideas:

- Craft pom poms
- Water beads
- Fake flowers
- Glitter
- Floral filler
- Small brightly colored figures



Remember, there are 5 senses so make different kinds of bags to help your child explore different senses and to explore them in different ways. Some of the bags I made were squishy, some were more firm. Some made fun sounds while others were quiet.

Every sight, sound, and experience is new to your child so even a simple bag like yellow outlined one above, made with fake flowers from a lei and hair gel, will be fun and new to them.

Make sure to include your child while you make the bags. My child had a great time watching me put them together and then I could hand them off to her as I finished. (Just make sure they can't reach any of the little pieces that you're using for the bags.)

Tips:

- Make sure you get [ziploc bags](#) that you push sealed, not the zipper kind. The zippers keep you from getting a tight seal and caused one to leak the first time I made sensory bags.
- Double bagging them can help ensure a good seal and add a little extra thickness to prevent little fingernails from puncturing the bag.
- I only needed about half of a large bottle of hair gel for the bag I made so only buy as much as you think you'll need.
- Don't want to run to the store? You can get [Craft Supplies](#) delivered to your door in 2 days by Amazon.

Remember: Your conversation and interaction with your child is the important aspect of sensory play.