

The importance of messy and outdoor play



Why?

The sense of touch is important for learning about our own bodies, objects and our world. Children should have the opportunity to explore their world in a safe and controlled way through play, inside and outside. This can give them the opportunity to feel lots of different surfaces, textures, sensations and nature by playing with them. It is important for children to explore in clean, dry, wet and messy places so they can get themselves dirty. This should be fun for children and it is OK to get dirty!

Outdoor play

- Playing at the park or beach
- Rolling down grassy slopes
- Playing in a sand pit
- Running barefoot in the garden
- Playing in ball pools
- Running through sprinklers
- Playing in paddling pools
- Climbing trees and walls within the safety limits for you child
- Digging in the garden or at the beach
- Gardening and growing things

- Collecting leaves, acorns, pinecones, shells etc for making collages and pictures
- Making mud pies

Indoor play

- Rolling around the floor and carpets
- Playing on the floor
- Rolling child up in towels, duvets and blankets
- Making tents from blankets and sheets
- Playing in sand and water
- Finger and foot painting
- Cutting and gluing to make pictures with leaves, scrap materials, dry food, sand, cereal boxes etc
- Hiding toys and things in dry rice, sand, beans, shaving foam, spaghetti etc for child to find
- Making and using play dough, gloop and slime
- Baking breads, pastry and dough's using hands
- Making pizzas, fruit salad, sandwiches etc
- Playing in food for babies and toddlers
- Using sponges, flannels, loofahs, scrub mits at bath time
- Use bubble baths, creams. Lotions and talcum powder at bath time

Recipes for messy play

• Play dough

- 2 cups plain flour
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup salt
- 2 tablespoons cooking oil
- 1 tablespoon cream of tartar
- Food colouring – few drops

Mix together in a sauce pan and bring to the boil
Cook for 2 minutes until it forms a solid lump
Allow to cool
Child can now help you to knead it smooth
Store in a plastic bag

• Gloop

- 2 cups cornflour
- Water
- Food colouring

Carefully add water to cornflour until it becomes semi firm

You can now mould it in your hands but when you stop it runs through your fingers
You can add more water to make it runnier and play with it on a tray or in a bowl

- **Cornflour clay**

1 cup cornflour
2 cups salt
1 1/3 cups cold water

Put salt and 2/3 cups of water in a sauce pan and bring it to boil
Mix rest of cornflour with remaining water and stir well
Blend the two mixtures and knead into clay
Mould the clay and let it dry for several hours, it can then be painted

- **Lux Flakes**

½ box lux flakes
Hot water from the kettle
Food colouring

In a bucket or very large and deep bowl, mix with electric whisk until it is thick and creamy. This makes enough to play with in a baby bath.