

LIZELLE KEYSER
Paediatric Occupational Therapist

Dear Parents,

Your child learns by exploring through their senses. These activities have been developed for you to do at home with your child, with resources which you most likely might have within your home. You can choose from the activities, which best suit your child. The week schedule has an overview of all the activities.

Movement:



Hide the puzzle:

Materials needed: Inset puzzle (or other chunky plastic toys)

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Hide the inset puzzle pieces around the room.

Play:

- The child needs to find the pieces, run back to the inset board and place it in the puzzle board.



Indoor maze:

Materials needed: Crepe paper streamer, masking tape

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Use crepe paper (some toilet paper might even work, but will break much easier) and masking tape to hold it in place in a hallway.
- Form a maze in the hallway, for the child to move their body through.
- Make sure that you put some parts at the top and some at the bottom, with enough space to climb through and under.

Play:

- The child steps over and crawls under the maze, to go through it.



Indoor bowling:

Materials needed: 10 plastic empty water bottles, materials to place inside (optional), ball

Steps to play:

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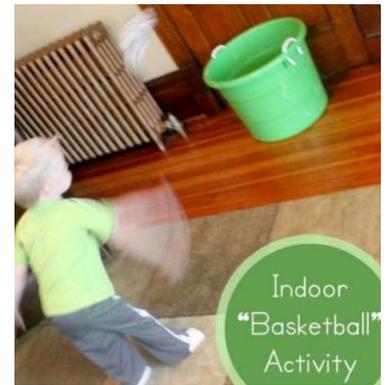
Preparation:

- You can use the bottles as is, or decorate them in various ways such as filling it up with a small amount of paint or food colouring and filling it up with water. Different colours in different bottles.
- You can let the child help fill the bottles e.g. by pushing strips of coloured or shredded paper into the bottle opening to fill it up:



Play:

- Place the bottles upright in a triangular pattern and let the child throw or roll the ball, to knock over the bottles.
- Another idea: Place a container (bucke/laundry basket/box) a meter or 2 away from your child, depending on your child's ability. Let them scrunch up paper in balls and to make 10 balls. They throw the balls to the container. It is worth putting masking tape on the floor, to give them an indication of where to stand when throwing.



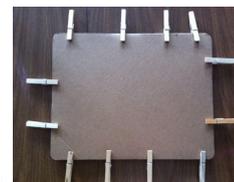
DIY balance board:

Materials needed: 3 sheets of equal sized cardboards, glue, popsicle sticks (optional), 25 cm of half a pool noodle

Steps to play: <https://youtu.be/C9Tw7B3pkMI>

Preparation:

- The link above shows a video of how to make the balance board.
- Cut 3 sheets of equal sized cardboards.
- Place glue on one of the cardboard pieces. You can spread the glue with a popsicle stick. Place the other cardboard piece on top.
- Then do the same, by placing glue on the next cardboard piece and spread it with the popsicle stick. Place the third piece of cardboard on top.
- Hold it in place with clothing pegs or clamps until it has dried. The aim is for the three cardboard pieces to be glued together.
- Cut a 25cm piece off a pool noodle. Cut it in half point to point. This needs to be glued to the bottom of the cardboard pieces.



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Play:

- When it has dried, your child can balance on it. It is great for children who seek out balance and movement through climbing.
- Try balancing on both legs, one leg and even sitting on it.



- For the child that likes to move and fiddle, you can put it under a desk; to put their feet on while working.



Tactile stimulation:

Pom Pom Ice Cream Sensory bag:

Materials needed: Zip-lock food bag, masking tape, cardboard, ice cream cone picture from **Sensory bags backgrounds**, hair gel, 3 large pom poms of each colour of the ice cream cone

Steps to play:

<https://happytotshelf.com/pompom-ice-cream-sensory-bag-absolutely-fun-2-in-1-learning-activity/>

Preparation: <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bzjif5NFn6k/>

- Watch the above video clip on how to make it.
- Cut out a cardboard slightly (1 cm all round) bigger than the zip-lock bag.
- Fill the zip-lock bag with hair gel and pom poms. For the 4 ice cream cones, you need 12 pom poms (4 colours).
- Let all the air out of the bag by pressing lightly on the bag, before sealing/closing it.
- Put the bag on the cardboard and use the masking tape to tape the two sides and bottom edge to the cardboard.
- Print or draw the ice cream cone picture. Slide this in between the zip-lock bag and the cardboard.



Play:

- The child needs to push the pom poms with their finger to the top of the ice cream cone. They can colour match the pom poms to the cone.
- Other ideas: You can slide in any template of picture, for your child to do. In the sensory bag template, I've added a few e.g. fill the heart, flowers in the tree, fill the trucks, feed the emoji.



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Dry textured play:

Materials needed: Half a cup of flour, tray and different small cups and spoons

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Put a small amount of flour in a tray, with different sizes of spoons and cups.
- Don't use too much flour, as you will need to clean it up afterwards.



Play:

- Let the child play with the tray of flour.
- Another idea: Can they draw different shapes and patterns in the flour?
- When finished, let them help to vacuum up the flour with the vacuum pipe.



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Graphics by Krista Wallden <http://www.teachingmama.com/2016/01/20/krista-wallden/>



If you need a template of the patterns, you can download it from:

<https://www.toolstogrowot.com/free-therapy-resources/sort/date-new>

Scroll down to the Tactile Design cards. It is for free, but you will need to register with the website to login.

Messy play:

Materials needed: plastic tubs, material to fill the tub (water beads, sand, dry black beans, colored water [drops of food colouring and water], shaving cream), towels

Steps to play: <https://teachingmama.org/sensory-walk-exploring-the-sense-of-touch/>

Preparation: Setting up a sensory walk -

- In the pictures they used 7 tubs. You could use however many you'd like!
- When you design your sensory walk, make sure to keep in mind times when kids would need to clean their feet off before stepping into another bin (ex: shaving cream needs to be cleaned off before stepping into sand!).
- Here's the order of how the sensory walk was designed in the photo: dry black beans, water beads, blue water, towel, sand, shaving cream, green water, and towel.



SENSORY WALK
exploring the sense of touch

Play:

- Let your child walk through the bins. Talk with them how the different textures feel under their feet. Some might feel hard, soft, cold, squishy, fluffy, cold etc.
- Make sure that they dry their feet off after the coloured water, to not make the sand stick to it.
- Other ideas: If they get bored with the sensory walk, you can use the tubs to add some toys to play in as sensory bins.

Messy play with food:

Materials needed: Jelly (you can make one colour or a few colours); small plastic toys, small assorted kitchen containers such as ice trays, small cups and spoons

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Make jelly until it is set.
- Provide your child with a sensory bin of jelly, with small kitchen utensils to play with.
- Remember, it is ok if they put this to their mouth, but if not; that is also fine.

Play:

- Your child explores jelly in play.



- Some more ideas:



<https://besttoys4toddlers.com/jelly-sensory-play-ideas-kids/>

Oral motor:

Blow the balloon:

Materials needed: Paper cups and pom poms

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Turn 6 cups upside down and place a pompom on the back of it.
- Place a smaller cup behind the cups, as in the picture. You can also cut the bottom of a paper cup, to make it shorter.
- First try the activity yourself, to make sure the distance from the cups and the size of cups works.

Play:

- The child blows the pompom from the top of the cup, into the other cup.



Drinking from a sports bottle & other oral motor ideas:

Materials needed: Drinking from a sports bottle

Steps to play:

- Instead of giving a drink in a cup, provide a drink with a straw or with a sports bottle, to encourage sucking. This increases oral motor stimulation in the mouth and helps to organise a child internally.

Other oral motor ideas:

- Use a vibrating toothbrush to brush teeth.
- Place yogurt, applesauce or pudding on the corners of their mouth and tell them to lick it off.
- Blow raspberries
- Lick popsicles or ice lollies on the outside of the mouth.

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- Drinking through a straw. Try thicker liquids such as milkshakes or pudding through a shorter straw.
- Chew with back of mouth on chewy foods such as dried mango strip, beef jerky or licorice.
- Chew on crunchy snacks such as celery or carrot sticks.
- Eat gum.

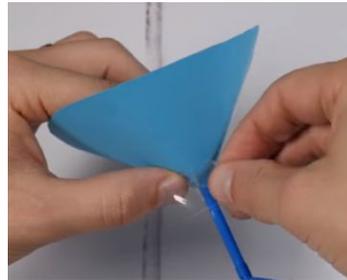
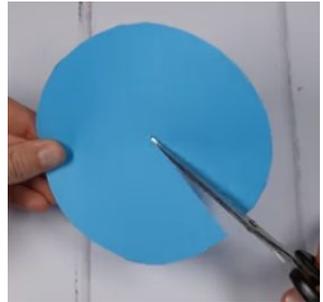
Blowing pom poms:

Materials needed: Paper, scissor, sellotape, straw, pompoms (smaller)

Steps to play:

Preparation: <https://youtu.be/SR5rcuJrIE8>

- Place a large bowl on paper and draw a circle around it. You can also draw a circle with a diameter of about 20cm.
- Cut out the circle and cut to the middle of the circle.
- Roll the circle to form a cone. Place tape on the outside to keep it in shape.
- Cut a small piece at the bottom of the cone, to fit a straw.
- Place the one end of the straw through the hole, and keep it in place, by putting a small piece of sellotape at the bottom of the cone and straw.



Play:

- Place one pompom in at a time, and let your child blow the straw, to pop the pom pom out.

Roller coaster breathing:

Slowly trace your left hand with your right index finger, starting where your hand and wrist meet. As you trace each finger, breathe in as your finger climbs up and breathe out as your finger slides down. Pretend that your finger is a slow roller coaster car, going up and down the tracks. Remember this is a SLOW roller coaster, instead of going fast, the car moves very slowly. After you trace your entire hand, swap hands and try your other hand.



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Auditory:

DIY Harmonica:

Materials needed: 2 large Lollipop sticks, small elastic bands (you can use loom bands if you have them hanging around the house), paper, scissors, toothpicks

Steps to play:

Preparation: <https://www.parentsfirst.babyfirsttv.com/post/diy-harmonica-for-kids>

- Cut a piece of paper the length of a craft stick
- Place the paper onto one of the craft sticks
- Place another craft stick on top and wrap one small elastic band around one of the ends
- Cut the toothpick to the width of the craft stick and place between the craft sticks and the piece of paper as close to the elastic and as possible
- Tuck the toothpick in so it does not stick out on either side
- Repeat with the toothpick on the other side and wrap the other end with an elastic band



Play:

- Your child blows into the lollipop sticks, to create their own tunes.

Calming music:

Calming background music can settle the mood:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2fIWB8o-bs> (calming)

<https://youtu.be/IHFx3xOJf0g> (calming)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjnyeZLNb3E>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFyC68CIEio> (exciting)

Notice if the music and visuals excite or calm your child.



Barefoot books:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/barefootbooks>



Dances:

Koo Koo Canga Roo Youtube channel encourages kids to get moving!

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLE8B1DE388BFF8B78>

The Learning Station Youtube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4Hdb26_xnPQsntwLazMqYw

Proprioceptive/calming:

Great video about our proprioceptive system and why it is important:

<https://youtu.be/b2iOliN3fAE>

Towelling: Put lots of cream on your child's hand and forearm. Firmly massage the forearm and hand; then rub it with a dry face cloth in the direction from the elbow to the fingertips. If this is done firmly, it gives a deep pressure feeling; which can be quite calming.

Therapy ball activities for proprioception:

Materials needed: Therapy ball

Steps to play: <https://youtu.be/x3ubWw9TA3o>

Listen to the Youtube video for instructions and demonstration on how to use the therapy ball. This is especially great if your child is boisterous, seeking out movement, crashing and bumping into things.

Pushing the ball:

- Stand on either side of the therapy ball and push the ball away. Your child needs to try and push the ball away with their hands.
- You can also use a ball each, to push against each other. Try to push the other person away.
- You can push the therapy ball against your child's body and they need to try and push it away for that body part e.g. their body, head, hip.



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Crashing:

- Help your child to climb on the ball either by standing, sitting or rolling. Let them jump onto cushions or mattress for a soft crash landing.



Roll and crash:

- Another great way for crashing is to roll with your body over the ball and then crash onto the cushions or mattress.



Fine motor skills:

Find the toys:

Materials needed: glue, shoe box top, matching small objects (we used foam shapes in the pictures) and any tactile medium (such as corn, rice, pasta, sand).

Steps to play: <https://www.yourtherapysource.com/huntandfind.html>

Preparation:

- Glue on one set of the matching objects on to the box top. Let dry for 24 hours.



- Place the box top on a large tray with the matching objects around the box top. Pour the tactile medium into the box top. For this example we used dried corn.



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Play:

- Now the child should search through the corn to find the matching objects. The child can dig and trace fingers around each shape. Once a shape is found in the corn, remove the matching shape off of the tray. Continue until all shapes have been found.



Ear butts:

Materials needed: Coriander, ear butts

Steps to play:

- The children push the ear butts through the holes of the coriander, to make it disappear. Can you do it with all?



Egg carton train:

Materials needed: Egg carton, scissors, hole punch, pipe cleaners

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Cut the egg carton into individual egg pieces.
- Punch a hole on either side of the pieces.

Play:

- The child can push the pipe cleaner through the holes to make a pipe cleaner train.



Spoon it out:

Materials needed: Bowl, dessert spoon and lids or pastas

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Place the milk lids or pastas into a bowl with water.

Play:

- Scoop out the lids from the water with the spoon.



Fine motor skills:

Posting straws:

Materials needed: Straws, toilet roll tubes, hole punch

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Punch holes around the toilet roll tubes.



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Play:

- The child feeds the straws through the holes in the tubes.
- If you colour in the holes, they can colour match the hole to the straw.

Screw on the lids:

Materials needed: empty bottles and containers with lids

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- You can either just place all the bottles and containers in a large bowl, with the lids beside them, or
- Cut them in half and glue them on cardboard.
- If they find it difficult, you might consider giving one at a time.



Play:

- The child must screw on (and off) all the lids on the containers.
- Other ideas: If you have containers with larger openings, you can put something inside for them to get, if they unscrew the lid.

Squeezing pegs:

Materials needed: clothing pegs, empty shoe box

Steps to play:

- Give your child an empty shoe box and some clothing pegs.
- The child needs to press the clothing peg and place it on the edge of the shoebox.
- You might need to assist them the first few tries, to understand how to open and close the peg. Do this by putting your fingers over theirs when pressing.



Alternative:

- You can place stickers on the edge of the box. The child needs to place the pegs on the stickers.
- If you use coloured pegs, you can place a coloured dot on the edge of the box. The child needs to match the colour of the peg with the colour on the box.



Threading necklace:

Materials needed: Shoe lace or string, toilet roll tubes or paper tubes

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Cut the toilet roll tubes in half.
- You can also make colourful tubes by using coloured cardboard cut into a rectangle and taping/glueing the short edges together.



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- Tie a toilet roll tube at one end of the shoelace.

Play:

- The child thread the tubes onto the string to make a necklace or long snake.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further advice or have questions.

Kind regards,

Lizelle Keyser

Independent Occupational Therapist