

Nursery activity guide: Sensory toe trays

Learning aims

- Physical development and developing muscles in the foot
- Sensory exploration with toes
- Language development - describing what they feel (age appropriate)



Resources:

- Trays, tubs, plastic boxes
- Plastic sheeting (if you are doing this indoors)
- Washing up bowl, flannels, towels
- Variety of sensory materials for you all to wriggle your toes in e.g. honey, feathers, smooth pebbles, cut grass, cut herbs, materials/cloth, baked beans, bubble bath/washing up liquid, plastic bricks, wooden blocks, coins, shredded paper, hay, grains/seeds, flour, jelly, paint, cotton wool.

Activity outline

1. Set up the trays with the materials
2. Think about how the children will access them... will they walk in them? Do you want a chair at each tray so children can sit down and wriggle their toes? How will you help the babies access these trays?
3. You may choose to have covers on the trays to encourage the children to tell you what they think is in the tray using their feet (this would be a good extension activity for the children exceeding this stage of development)
4. Set up the foot washing station
5. For older children - invite the children over and role model the activity; talk about what you want the children to do and what you want them to talk

about (e.g. describe what they are feeling, tell you what is in the tray), they may choose to work in pairs and tell their partner what they think is in the tray, then swap over!

6. For babies – sit with the babies and role model by wiggling your toes in each tray and introducing or reinforcing language development with the children e.g. tickly, soft, sticky, hard, smooth, cold, warm
7. Record the activity using the words the children come up with, take photos of the children's expressions as they wriggle their toes and pictures of the tray contents, then the children can match the expressions to the materials after the activity when you are consolidating their learning. You may also ask the children to write down or draw what they did and felt as an extension activity if you wish to incorporate mark making
8. Use the wash station to clean children's feet after the activity.

Next steps

You may choose to extend this activity for children if they are interested and wish to take it further, by asking the children to set up their own sensory toe trays for their friends and you as adults. What materials do they think would be good for wiggling toes in? Can they think about safe materials so toes don't get hurt?

Special considerations

- Remember to risk assess the activity for safety
- Don't use sharp materials and be careful of slippery feet during and after the activity
Check children's allergies to ensure you don't use anything a child in the group is allergic to
- Remember cross contamination between trays so avoid allergens if children have any allergies

Consider that some children will not enjoy this activity or feel comfortable putting their feet in these trays, don't force this and remember you can start small by wiggling toes in the water play or sand play to introduce this activity to reluctant participants.