

Exploring through touch: messy play and me

Age: 8–18 months

Resources: Tray or bowl, water,
a range of toys

Tips:

Try placing your hands on your child's upper arms, elbows, lower arms, or wrists to guide them to any item you would like them to touch. Once you've located the item together, maintain gentle contact to show them that you're there. For support, try placing your hands under your child's hand while you touch the texture together.

Talk about your shared experience; making this a calm but fun activity!

By exploring new textures in this way, your child can stop and pull their hand away if they're not comfortable. Re-introduce the texture again next time you play. Remember, it takes many opportunities to become familiar and comfortable with new textures, tastes and situations.

Activity:

- **Sing a variety** of nursery rhymes and songs which engage hands and feet. Tickle, rub and blow your child's hands and feet as you sing to bring attention to fingers and toes. This will help them to begin to identify their body parts, support their language development and increase your child's tolerance of different texture and tactile sensations.
- **Try to frequently set time** for fun, messy play. It's a good idea to have a set workspace to play in, such as a tray or washing-up bowl. Be prepared before you start with everything that you need.

- o Repeat this activity using different ideas such as warm or cold water. Talk to your child and use simple phrases relating directly to the play.
- o Every so often, you might want to add food colouring or glitter to the water, if this is appropriate to your child's vision.
- Try adding **different objects** to the water which contrast to the container you're using. Encourage your child to explore floating and sinking.
- Use a **variety of jugs, cups and bowls** to fill. Talk about and feel the differences between full and empty. Pour between containers exploring each one first and before introducing new resources.
- **Use a sponge** to squeeze. Let your child explore this when dry, feel the weight and squeeze. Soak the sponge in the water and again encourage your child to feel its weight; squeeze and enjoy the water.
- **Play with** toy fish, whales, ducks – what are their distinguishing features, do they swim on top, or underneath the water? Add in boat toys too if this is appropriate.
- **Splash and play for fun!**



Notes:

Please supervise your child at all times while completing any of the activities outlined on this sheet. Stop any activity if your child becomes upset, unwell or you are unsure if you are completing it correctly.

The activities on this card align with stage 2 of the [Developmental Journal Babies Visual Impairment \(DJVI\)](#)

If you would like any further advice or support, please contact the advice line on **0800 7811444** or via email children@guidedogs.org.uk