

Discovery Baskets

What is a discovery basket?

A discovery basket is a wonderful way to encourage sensory exploration for all ages. A discovery basket is a collection of materials designed to spark imagination and curiosity. Baskets can include nature, musical instruments, textured fabrics, or colourful toys. These baskets support fine motor and cognitive development while inviting children to learn about the world around them through their senses.



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What to add to your basket!

- Textured fabrics
- Nature
- Musical instruments
- Safe mirrors
- Sensory bottles
- Safe household items
- Sponges
- Wooden items
- Different types of brushes
- Books
- Scented items
- Glow in the dark items
- Fidget toys

Tips:

- All items should be age-appropriate, non-toxic, and free of choking hazards.
- Rotating the items that are in the baskets can keep children interested.
- Ideas for your basket: Board books, safe household items like wooden spoons or measuring cups, pieces of nature, different sizes of balls with different textures.

Engaging with the basket

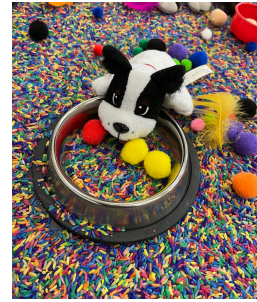
- Follow their lead, and include items based on the interests of the children. E.g. If the children recently went to a farm, you could add items on this topic.
- Encourage children to explore the basket together to promote positive social interactions.
- You as the provider can explore the basket with the children. This is a great opportunity to enrich the experience by introducing vocabulary into the play.



Sensory Play In Early Childhood

What is Sensory Play?

“The term “sensory play” is play that helps children interact with and make sense of the world using their senses. Activities that stimulate a child’s senses (touch, sight, hearing, smell, taste and/or vestibular) encourage learning through exploration while fostering curiosity, problem solving, and creativity. It helps to build nerve connections in the brain promoting sensory integration, and encourages the development of language, social, emotional, and motor skills.



Benefits of Sensory Play:

Hearing “Auditory Sensory Play”- The loud banging of blocks, the fun of banging on pots and pans, moving to the beat of music, - these are all types of auditory sensory play that help children differentiate sounds, understand rhythm, and improve attention skills. Auditory input can also be calming - consider rice in a bottle or the sound of water.

Touch “Tactile Sensory Play” - This type of sensory play is very common and what we think of most, when we think of traditional sensory play. It’s exploring through touch using our hands in a sensory bin. Children enjoy running their hands through the filler material and watching what happens as they mix, sift, or pour it out. The benefits to this type of play are endless. It is calming and extremely beneficial for fine motor development and hand strength. Children also learn about the physical properties of the bin materials including texture, weight, density, etc.

Sight “Visual Sensory Play” - Matching colours, making patterns, light cubes, light up toys, mirrors, and liquid motion toys are all excellent examples of visual sensory play. This type of play builds cognitive skills and enhances memory.

Movement “Proprioception and Vestibular Sensory Play” - These senses are all about movement, balance, coordination, and body awareness. Through vestibular play, children learn about their bodies: where they are in space, how they move, and how their limbs relate to the rest of their body. Activities to promote this type of play include rolling down hills, jumping, swinging, running, yoga, and hanging from the monkey bars.



Coloured Rice Recipe



1. PUT 1 CUP OF RICE IN A RESEALABLE PLASTIC BAG.
2. ADD 1/2 TSP. OF VINEGAR AND A BIT OF GEL OR LIQUID FOOD COLOURING.
3. SEAL THE BAG AND SHAKE WELL.
4. SPREAD THE COLOURED RICE OUT ON A BAKING TRAY TO DRY.
5. REPEAT WITH OTHER COLOURS.
6. USE IN SENSORY PLAY, AND HAVE FUN!



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