

Outdoor Play



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Ideas for Outdoor Play

There are lots of different types of outdoor play. It doesn't have to be all about being very active.

- **Imaginary play.** Set up an area to be a shop, or a school, etc.
- **Places to mark-make, draw or write.** A paving slab is great for using chalk or paint. A bucket and a wet brush can also be fun. Painting on a fence with coloured water.
- **Active play.** Set up an obstacle course with a chair to crawl under, tins to slalom around, cushions as stepping stones.
- **Different surfaces to walk, run, crawl, lie on.**
- **Sensory stimulation.** Experiment with different senses. Put things in a pillow case to feel with the hands or feet. Make potions to smell from garden weeds.
- **Places to grow plants.** Plant some seeds
- **Wheeled toys of different sizes,** to push & pull, sit on , make tracks for.
- **Construction / building.** Take the Lego. etc. outside on an old sheet. Experiment with other types of building, e.g. twigs, newspaper, toilet rolls, tin cans. Etc.
- **Sand, mud, water, soil play & other messy play.** Put it into a paddling pool, plastic crate or washing-up bowl.
- **Ball games.** Practice catching, throwing, hitting, etc. with softer and larger items, e.g. cushions, rolled up pair of socks, etc.
- **Quiet time.** Just lie on the grass or on a blanket and have some quiet time.
- **Shelter / dens.** The building of dens is often more fun than playing in them.

Sensori-motor Play.

Children learn about the world by exploring it physically. Help them to do this with any kind of messy play. (See suggested ideas)

	<u>Messy Play e.g. Sand</u>
Visual (sight)	Looking closely at grains of sand, Watching sand being poured, patterns drawn in sand, hands/feet covered in sand, toys buried in sand, stirring sand, dry to wet sand.
Olfactory (smell)	
Auditory (sound)	Sounds of footsteps on wet or dry sand, digging sound, squeezing sound, and patting sound.
Tactile (touch)	Sand on different body parts, warm sand, cold sand, wet sand & dry sand, trickling through fingers
Gustatory (taste)	
Vestibular (balance)	Sitting in sand, walking on sand, digging or sweeping sand, wheelbarrowing sand
Proprioceptive (body position)	Sitting, lying, walking, rolling on sand, lifting and carrying quantities of sand.
Kinaesthetic (movement)	Digging, drawing, sweeping, pouring, carrying, burrowing.

Messy Play Ideas

Choose substances that are safe for your particular child & always supervise.

Some children are reluctant to play with some types of messy stuff. Go with whatever they enjoy. It has to be fun. Dry is often preferred by children (and easier to sweep up).

Be particularly careful with children who put things in their mouths (or other places). Also be aware that some children may inhale powdery substances.

Dry Play

Cereals	Pasta	Couscous	Shredded paper
Rice	Tapioca	Fake Snow	Grass cuttings
Lentils	Moonsand	Cocoa powder	Sand
Flour	Crushed biscuits	Milk powder	Bread crumbs
Compost	Dried leaves	Porridge oats	Popped Popcorn

Wet Play

Cornflour gloop	Jelly	Tinned tomatoes	Baked Beans
Rice pudding	Cooked spaghetti	Condensed milk	Yoghurt
Angel delight	Banana	Milkshake powder	Clean mud
Shaving foam	Crazy soap	Squirty cream	Mashed potato
Sand mousse	Water beads	Custard	Porridge
Natural yoghurt	Weetabix (mixed with water)		Gelatine

Non-messy Messy play

Use sealed laminating pouches (ironed around the edges) to contain messy play substance. Different pockets can be made to contain different colours, with small gaps to allow mixing.

Mark making

Dry or wet substances that flow easily over an appropriate surface can provide opportunities for drawing.

Flour	Lentils	Mashed potato	Coloured rice
Glitter	Compost	Tea leaves	Custard

If your children are likely to taste the food, use healthy foods where possible and plan this activity for directly after a meal.

Many of these ideas are taken from '*Messy Play*' by Tracey Beckerleg, 2009

Children often enjoy playing with 'Loose Parts'

Loose parts is another name for a heap of the same items. Choose items that are safe for your child. Clearly some of these listed below may not be safe for some children. Children can often learn to play imaginatively with these random items.

- Empty boxes or food cartons.
- Conkers
- Lids
- Sand
- Shells
- Logs
- Toilet rolls
- Pebbles
- Pieces of string
- Dried leaves
- Freshly cut grass
- Feathers
- Toy Bricks
- Sticks
- Pieces of Rope
- Assorted foliage
- Fabric pieces
- Tarpaulins /plastic sheets
- Fir cones
- Cloth
- Sand
- Compost
- Empty containers

(It is not recommended that you remove quantities of natural materials from the natural environment)

Windy Weather

Look at weather and think about making the most of what the weather is doing.

- flags
- streamers
- umbrellas
- scarves
- sheets
- ribbon sticks
- windmillslarge garden type and hand held
- ribbons attached to curtain rings to fly in the wind (or attached to hair scrunchies)
- streamers
- bubbles
- windsocks
- balloons
- confetti / rose petals
- wind chimes
- foam Frisbees
- cheerleader pompoms
- kites
- super light fabric ball /balloon balls
- parachute

Parachute Games

1. **Popcorn:** Place a number of beanbags, small balls, or cotton wool balls onto the parachute. Shake to make them pop up like "popcorn".
2. **Ball Roll:** The children try to roll the balls into the hole in the middle of the parachute or try to keep the balls from going into the hole in the middle.
3. **Making Waves:** Children can make small, medium, or large movements to make various types of "waves." You can incorporate a story about a ship on the sea, weather, or sing "the big ship sailed on the alley, alley oh"
4. **Merry-Go-Round:** Children turn their bodies sideways and hold the chute with one hand. They then walk around in a circle, making a "Merry-Go-Round." For variety, children can hop, skip, jump, etc. You can stop music as a cue to reverse and go the other direction.
5. **Poison Snakes:** Place three or four skipping ropes onto the chute. Shake the parachute to keep the snakes from "biting" (touching) you.
6. **Swapping places;** Lift the parachute high into the air. Call out two children's names. They must swap places before the parachute comes down.
7. **Fruit Salad:** Give the children the names of fruit and call out two or three fruit names to swap places. When fruit salad is called, everyone swaps places.
8. **The Wave:** Children put their hands up, one after another, in order – creating a synchronized "wave".
9. **See-Saw Pull:** From a sitting position, have children pull the parachute back and forth in a cooperative see-saw motion.
10. **Bouncing Balls:** One or two children under the chute trying to hit the balls as they touch the surface, knocking them off the parachute (from underneath.)
11. **Flying Saucer:** All take one step forward upon lifting the chute in the air. Upon command, all let go, and watch as it slowly floats.
12. Lie small children on the floor and let them enjoy watching as the adults raise and lower the parachute above them.
13. Many well-known **songs** can be turned into parachute games. These can be particularly suitable for little ones.
 - ... Grand Old Duke of York