

# LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

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EXPLORE & DEVELOP ACTIVITIES TO CONNECT, ENGAGE  
AND LEARN THROUGH PLAY







# BUILDING YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING CAPACITY

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY BASED LEARNING

Play based learning encourages exploration, creativity, and imagination as well as cognitive, physical and social development.

Children learn while having fun and without realising that they are learning. So many concepts can be learned through simple conversations combined with fun experiences.

At Explore & Develop, we pride ourselves on being able to provide these experiences to children through our programs within our services. But, there's no reason why you can't continue that learning and fun at home.

Here are some activities that not only offer the opportunity to create some great memories together, but also aid in your child's development and keep them engaged in learning through play.



# CREATING ART WITH NATURAL DYES/PAINT

## DEVELOPMENTAL BENEFITS

This activity encourages:

- The appreciation and understanding of Indigenous culture and inclusion.
- Engagement with the natural environment, building a sense of awareness of the world around them.
- Fine motor skills involved in collecting and preparing the ingredients.
- Hand-eye co-ordination when mixing and preparing the ingredients for painting/dyeing.
- Understanding of scientific concepts – hypotheses, curiosity, experimentation and utensil/tool familiarisation.

## METHOD

To make a traditional type of paint at home, you can use the following mixture as your base and add food colouring to create your own dyed paints:

- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup salt
- 1 cup luke-warm water

1. Combine flour and salt, and mix.
2. Slowly add in the warm water.
3. Whisk until all ingredients are combined to form a smooth texture.
4. Add your desired colouring.

## INGREDIENTS & EQUIPMENT

Traditionally, Aboriginal artists used paints sourced from their natural environment - ochre, clay pigments, plant gums and resin. Why not experiment with different things you find in your natural environment to make your own paints?

Some that you can try:

- Blue – blackberries, blackcurrants, blueberries
- Red/Pink – beetroot, rose petals, cranberries, strawberries
- Yellow/Orange – mustard powder, pumpkin
- Green – spinach, leaves, grass

To make your own natural paints:

- Push berries or other soft fruit through a sieve to extract your pigment, then mix with just a small splash of water.
- Grind petals, leaves, or other dry items before mixing with a drop of honey, or if you want a runny consistency, add drops of water.
- Powders are the easiest to use. Mix powders like mustard powder in water, being careful to add water gradually to get the right consistency and colour.

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# SENSORY JAR

## DEVELOPMENTAL BENEFITS

This activity encourages the learning of:

- Scientific and mathematical concepts - measuring, volume, hypothesising and counting skills.
- Fine motor skills, through manoeuvring the measuring equipment and holding it steady.
- Emotional regulation - it can help your child become calm by counting how long it takes for the shells to stop swirling.

## INGREDIENTS

- 500ml water bottle
- 1/3 – 1/2 cup distilled water
- 1/3 - 1/2 cup sea-shells
- Food colouring or liquid watercolour paint
- Liquid hand soap
- Funnel
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Hot glue gun with glue, or water-resistant super glue

## METHOD

1. Clean, soak and rinse the sea-shells.
2. Add sea-shells to the water bottle.
3. Pour 1/3 - 1/2 cup water into the water bottle (note: more water will make the shells move faster; less water will make shells move slower).
4. Add colouring (food colour or liquid watercolour paint) into the water bottle.
5. Gently swirl to incorporate the colouring throughout the water.
6. Add clear liquid hand soap to the water bottle, so that it is filled right to the top. Otherwise, it will become a frothy mess.

It may take a little while for all the ingredients to settle.

Alternatives:

You can use a variety of different objects to make sensory jars, some options include:

- Bio-glitter (biodegradable glitter)
- Loom Bands
- Sand
- Natural items such as leaves, flower petals, sticks and grass
- Seeds
- LEGO







# HAMMERING NAILS INTO WOOD

## DEVELOPMENTAL BENEFITS

This activity helps to develop:

- Hand-eye coordination and strength in your child's hands, which is especially important for writing.
- A sense of responsibility in your child.
- Persistence and perseverance in completing a task and mastering a skill.
- Trust in your relationship with your child, while they learn the importance of safety and following rules. This activity can be considered a 'healthy risk'.

## INGREDIENTS AND EQUIPMENT

- Plank or stump of your choice of softwood – preferably something leftover from a previous project.
- Roofer Nails (any other nail with a large head is fine)
- Pencil
- Hammer

## METHOD

1. Ensure your softwood does not have any nasty splintery hazards.
2. Explain the safety rules involved in the task.
3. Demonstrate the steps in hammering a nail into wood (draw a spot with the pencil, line the nail up on the spot, hold nail steady between your thumb and pointer finger, line the hammer up and....hit, once nail has grabbed you can remove your thumb and pointer finger, keep hitting the nail head until it is securely in the wood).
4. Allow them to have a turn – you may need to introduce them to the process one step at a time before relinquishing completely from the process.



# DOING THE LAUNDRY

## DEVELOPMENTAL BENEFITS

This activity encourages the learning of scientific and mathematical skills:

- Categorisation
- Measuring
- Counting skills
- Following procedures

Additionally, persistence and perseverance are learnt through completing a task and mastering a skill.

This is a life skill that invites responsibility, independence and trust.

## INGREDIENTS & EQUIPMENT

A washing machine and dirty laundry.

## METHOD

1. Allow children to sort the laundry into piles (e.g. whites, colours, towels, etc.).
2. Talk through the decision on which pile to launder first.
3. Explain how much laundry powder/liquid needs to go into the machine and where.
4. Allow them to measure out the powder/liquid.
5. Explain which buttons to press and how many times.
6. Celebrate together after they press the “start button”.
7. Listen out for the water to start filling the machine – discuss the steps involved in a washing cycle.

