

Messy play with food

Children often explore the world through touch, whether that is with their hands or mouth. Messy play with food helps them become familiar with different sensations and makes new foods less scary. Every child is different, and some might not like certain textures at the start. If they start to become distressed, allow them to leave the activity.

Dry play ideas



- Start by putting dry and coarse textures in a bowl, such as rice, cereal or oats.
 - They can run their hands through the bowl of dry food. You can hide rewards in the bowl such as small toys for them to find.
 - They can crush up the cereal with their hands.
 - Add food colouring to the bowl and encourage them to mix it in with their hands.
- You can also place different foods in a bag. Let your child look into the bag before picking out an item. Then slowly progress to them doing this with their eyes closed.
- They can try cutting up foods like bread with cookie cutters. Or they can try painting using sauces.

Wet play ideas



As your child starts to become more relaxed with the texture of dry items, you can move onto wet sticky textures such as:

- making jelly or slime
- playing with playdough
- baking some scones or fairy cakes together
- playing with items in a bucket of water or the bath
- playing in the garden with leaves and twigs
- helping to plant some flowers
- making different things with arts and crafts