

Helping My Sensory Needs: Connecting with me Through Sensory Play



Entering their Sensory World

Does it ever seem like your child is lost in their own world?

Sometimes, sensory play can be so exciting and rewarding for them, that it can be hard to focus on anything else.

As a parent or carer, you can use your understanding of their sensory needs, to:

- Connect with them
- Play together
- Help them learn how to watch and copy and play together
- Help them connect with siblings, friends and other family.
- Help them feel more confident in their differences.

Step 1: Get yourself ready:

Understand why sensory play is important for your child's development.

Observe and learn their sensory preferences and favourite play activities. If you're not sure, try and provide a variety of sensory play (for ideas see the Sensory Zone webpage & youtube channel) and watch what they like.

Discover what play I'm best at, is it pouring, collecting, spreading out sand in patterns, banging for noises, running, swinging?

Step 2: Get the environment ready:

Think about reducing distractions or sensory things they don't like, such as turning the TV off so there isn't background noise.

Choose the right time of day and time of the week, when you feel calm and able to play, when you are not in a rush to do any jobs.

Have a look at the play activity pages on our website for ideas for everyday home items that can be used for sensory toys.



Step 3: Get your child ready:

- Choose a time to play together when they seem settled and relaxed.
- Help them prepare for play by showing them a toy, and telling them 'next it's play time'.



Step 4: Join in my Sensory Play:

If they are already playing with a sensory toy, gently approach them slowly and quietly, without interrupting them. Try being quiet and looking at their play happily.



Come down to the child's level.

Follow their lead, watch what they do and copy it, stop when they stop.

Help them enjoy their play by laughing & praising them



Step 4: Help grow my Sensory Play

Build on my play, teach me new ways to play with things I like.

Help me focus on one toy at a time, by bringing it out for me, then putting it away before I get another toy.

Explore these video links for examples of joining in your child's sensory play:

- *Copying what your Child does and Says Video:*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFoF4G1PGB8>
- *Interacting with a child while they do sensory play:*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UB8HIbLICTQ>

