



Have fun at home with these sensory-based activities for you and your child. Explore textures with your baby and have fun while building brainpower! Sensory play, including activities that promote touch, builds nerve connections in the brain. Research finds that play that involves the senses supports cognitive growth, fine and gross motor skills, problem solving skills and social learning. And, it's fun!

Creating easy sensory toys for your baby with items you can find around your home is a great and inexpensive way to continue building on the experiences of *Sailing on String* at home. Try one of these easy DIY projects after the show!

SENSORY BUCKET

A sensory bucket can be a great way to entertain your baby during playtime or even in the high-chair while you're making their meal! Gather a variety of objects with different textures and place them in a bucket. Try items like fabric squares, small toys, balls of different textures, pom poms or cotton balls, small toys and blocks - anything you have around the house (just check to make sure your items are not choking hazards). Place all the items in the bucket and place your little one in a high chair or on the floor. As you shake the bucket, sing the song "What's In The Bucket?" (to the tune of "Little Bunny Foo Foo"). ("What's in the bucket, what's in the bucket, what's in the bucket that we have? What's in the bucket, what's in the bucket, what's in the bucket that we have?") Have your child put their hand in and pull something out (you may need to help guide his hand). When you reveal the item, describe the item and talk about it, but also play with what else that item could be. A ribbon could be a tightrope! A strand of hair! A snake! Show your child how to imagine using these items and when your little one gets older, they can imagine these transformations with you.

SENSORY HOOPS

Wrap an old hula hoop with yarn, making sure to wrap tightly and secure the ends. Add sensory items as you wrap the yarn around the hula hoop. Try taping on items including dollar store finds, like loofas, pipe cleaners, velcro, ribbons or bows, a cut up old pool noodle, any type of material or felt -- anything you find that has an interesting texture! Make sure to secure the end of the yarn with tape. Place your baby inside the hoop on their tummy to promote tummy time, or seated when they're a bit older. The hoop can even hang on the wall or a doorknob! As your baby plays with each item, describe its attributes ("You've got the shiny blue ribbon. It's so smooth!") and help your baby explore the feeling of these items against different parts of their body as well, not just their hands and mouth! Just make sure that, as with any baby item, you're watching your child for safety during play.

SENSORY BOX

A cardboard box laying on its side can be a sensory exploration for your baby! Tape or glue strips of ribbon hanging from the open top edge, so that as your baby crawls into the box the ribbons lightly tickle their body. Glue squares of different textures around the inside of the box for your baby to discover. Include the bumpy inside portion of a cardboard box, shiny and fuzzy fabrics, even sandpaper!