

Sensory basket



<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/minamunns/treasure-baskets/> is a good link for ideas.

You can use a basket or a plastic tub or washing up bowl and the idea is to place household items in it of different textures which you can then give to your child to explore and talk to her about how they feel. Children with delayed movement often do not have a sense of their body in the same way as those who can move more so using textures and rolling them, stroking them, brushing them or touching them on hands, arms, legs, feet and tummy can help their awareness with you saying which body part it is on and how it feels. You can also place things on children's cheeks and head but be aware not to put things too close to the mouth to prevent biting of them and also be aware that stimulating the cheeks can increase drooling.

This activity could be followed with a body awareness song like 'head, shoulders, knees and toes' and 'row the boat, rock the boat' which you can do with you supporting your child in sitting and holding their arms so that they reach forwards and touch the floor and reach to the sides and touch the floor. This all helps with their arm strength and shoulder stability which in turn helps with head control. Always make sure their head is moving slowly and not flopping around.

Good ideas to put in it are:

Scarf

Bath scrunchie

Duster

Scouring pad (not a wire pan cleaner as too easy to get fingers caught and cut)

A whisk

A sieve

Small pan and a wooden spoon to bang on it

Squeezy ball

A hard ball

Washing liquid cup (make sure no sharp edges)

A hairbrush

A fluffy sock

Bubblewrap

A paintbrush

A vibrating toothbrush (be aware that some children like this and some really do not)

Tissue paper or other noisy paper when scrunched. Be careful it does not have sharp edges. Touch and feel story board books

A plastic bowl and Tupperware containers with dried pasta and/or dried rice in. Put the pasta or rice in the bowl for your child to move their hands through with you assisting and encouraging them hand over hand if required. You can colour the rice by putting some in a takeaway container above a radiator and putting food colouring on it and leave it overnight to make it more interesting. You can also put dolls, cars or other toys in with the pasta or rice for your to find. Again observe at all times due to choking risks.

Monitor your child's reactions to the objects and concentrate on the ones they do not have a negative reaction to. It might take a while to introduce the things they are less keen on and do this slowly. This will all help increase their sensory awareness and stimulate them to respond

Making a rainmaker

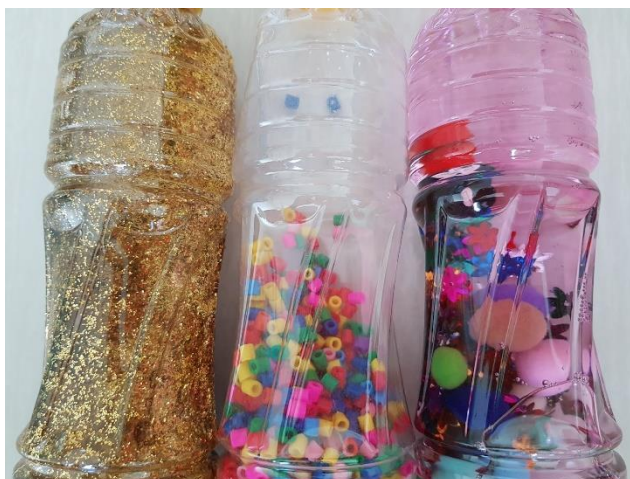
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOCYL4y3t98>



Use a cardboard tube like those from wrapping paper or kitchen roll or a Pringles container. Use some paper or greaseproof paper and elastic band to seal off one end if using a tube. You can tape it down too so you can ensure it is secure. If your paper is thin you might need to do more than one layer but be aware that this may dampen the sound. Then fill the tube 1/4 to 1/3 full with rice, pasta, marbles or similar items which will make a noise when the tube is tilted. Then cover the other end with paper and an elastic band and seal. The tube can have ribbons taped to it to make it interesting and so that it can be pulled towards the child if slightly out of reach. This is good for developing fine motor skills, arm and in hand strength and coordination, and hand-eye coordination while teaching about cause and effect and encouraging listening skills.

Making a sensory or musical bottle

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2Gkf_HFrMM



Find a small plastic drinks bottle preferably which will fit in your child's hand. Only fill it with the weight of water or gel which you feel your child can hold comfortably with your support. If it is too heavy your child will get tired more quickly. Here are different ideas you can put into the bottle to give different experiences:

- Put water in it with glitter and plastic small toys/craft pieces of different weights which will fit in the neck of the bottle. You can also colour the water with food colouring. The objects in the water will move quicker in water.
- Put oil in the bottle such as baby oil and put glitter or toys in it. The objects will move more slowly in oil.
- Use hair gel and mix with 6 parts warm water and fine glitter if you wish then pour into the bottle. Add plastic toys such as lego bricks. Put the lid on and see if the bricks move. If they don't then empty some of the liquid and add more warm water.

Put the cap on the bottle and if required seal with tape also. This encourages hand strength, arm strength, rotation of arm and hand-eye coordination.

Making a sensory bag



<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/topics/sensory-bags> is a good website with lots of different

ideas on sensory bags.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZQzjpXp8YU>

You need zip lock sandwich bags and tape. You may want to do this play on a wipe clean play mat just in case!

You can either put some runny hair or shower gel in the bag with food colouring and glitter or you can mix flour with food colouring then add water so it's like a paste but squishy enough to move around then put this in the bag. You can add sequins or buttons or other small objects to move around in it but which will not pierce the bag.

Squash the air out of the bag, seal the zip lock then cover the seal with tape to prevent the liquid squishing out.

Then you can encourage moving the goo around the bag with hand pressure putting your hand over your child's hand if they need support or with individual fingers to help hand strength, finger strength and tactile awareness.

How to make a mobile



Find an old coat hanger and some string and think about what the coat hanger can safely hang from so your child can reach the things hanging off it and so that you don't have to hold your arm in the air! Alternatively you could make an A frame if you are feeling adventurous and have materials to do this!

Find objects which will be of interest for your child to reach up to and move.
Suggestions are:

Milk bottle tops

Old CD's

Bath scrunchies (if they are plain you could try dyeing these to make them more interesting)

Colour a piece of paper in bright colours, fold it concertina style and tie some string in the middle then open it out to make it like a butterfly. You can cut it to make the wing shapes more realistic.

Cut out different coloured circles from card and different sizes. Using a needle and thread sew through each one individually so they are at intervals so about 6 hang from one piece of thread with about 3-6cm between each one.

Cut out moons and stars and thread.

Then attach to the coat hanger or frame with string ensuring they are just in reach for your child to move them. You don't want them to grab it but want to stimulate their vision by giving them something to watch and facilitate them to reach for it to move it. Bright and shiny things help stimulate vision. The height will vary for each child and it benefits to have a support under their upper arms (e.g. folded tea towels) near the shoulders to help your child to bring their arms up when they are lying on their back. This helps them work against

gravity. They may also benefit from hand over arm support to do this. It can help to do this after tummy time if that is not contraindicated for your child so that they have increased awareness of their arms and have activated their muscles.

Floor tables

If you do not have a floor table to do sitting activities at you can use a sturdy box, cut the flaps off the top, cut out one side away, upturn it and cut out a semi-circular tummy space on what was the bottom of the box then place activities on it. Make sure the box is at the child's elbow height. You can then sit your child at it with their legs under the box.

Sloped surfaces to encourage better head posture, reaching and seeing the activity

If you need to have a sloped surface for your child to see things better so that they do not flop their head forwards too far you can use a level arch file or two or three taped together depending on how steep an angle you need.

Messy play

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/topics/messy-play/#> has lots of different ideas.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdcC5ASP7nw> – How to make Gloop from corn flower

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roYa-L822ps> – How to make play dough

<https://playinspiredmum.com/diy-rainbow-foam-for-sensory-play/> -

- In supported sitting you can also cook some spaghetti and leave it to cool and put it on a tray or in a plastic bowl with some squirty cream or sensitive shaving foam for your child to explore with their hands.
- Mix some cornflour with water. It will appear runny but when your child touches it, it feels hard then will run through their fingers.
- Rubbery Goop – Ingredients: 2 cups bi-carbonate soda (baking soda), 1 ½ cups water, 1 cup of cornflour, food colouring (optional). Combined all ingredients into a saucepan, mix the ingredients together using a whisk to remove lumps, heat on stove stirring with a wooden spoon, bring the mixture to the boil continuously stirring, small lumps will begin to appear, continue to stir until a thick mixture has formed, turn out onto the worktop, **be careful as the Rubbery Goop will be very hot!** Knead together

to form a smooth ball of Rubbery Goop, store in a plastic zip-lock bag or air tight container. There are no preservatives in this recipe and depending on how many children play with the Rubbery Goop, it can last up to two weeks.

- Bubbly water. Hide water safe things in it like plastic bottle tops. Encourage your child to find them.
- Squirty cream or sensitive shaving foam – squirt it on a tray and encourage your child to explore it with their hands. You can draw in it for them to copy to encourage finger isolation and drawing skills.



We hope this helps. If you have difficulty with any of these ideas, need ideas to be adapted or want more advice please contact any of the three hospices and ask for the Physical Therapies Team.

Treehouse: 01473 271334

Milton: 01223 815100

Nook: 01603 967596

NB PLEASE OBSERVE YOUR CHILD AT ALL TIMES TO REDUCE ANY CHOKING RISKS IF THEY MIGHT PUT THINGS IN THEIR MOUTH. ALSO BE AWARE OF ANY ALLERGIES AND CHECK HOUSEHOLD OBJECTS FOR ANY SHARP BITS TO AVOID.