

Gluten-Free Sensory Play

Why is sensory play so important? Sensory play is important for children that seek or avoid input from their surroundings. Think of receiving sensory input like filling up a cup. The bigger the cup, the more liquid (or input) somebody needs. For children with small cups, exposure to sensory play can help lessen this defensiveness. The tools needed for these activities contain inexpensive household items and are all gluten-free.

Sensory Spaghetti:

Ingredients:

Gluten-free Spaghetti noodles: \$1.96 Walmart and Target

Olive Oil: \$2.52 Walmart

Sandwich bag: \$1 Dollar Tree

- Cook desired amount of spaghetti noodles following the directions on the box.
- After they are cooked, drain the water and rinse with cool water.
- Coat the noodles with 2 tbsp of olive oil
- Divide the noodles into sandwich bags for different colors.
- Drop food coloring into the bag of noodles and mix or shake around.
- Let it sit in for a few minutes.
- Pour them into a bin for play
- Store in the fridge until the next play time

<https://teachingmama.org/spooky-noodles-sensory-activity/>

Garden Bin:

Ingredients:

Black Beans: \$0.58 Walmart

Pasta Fiori \$1.17 Walmart

Plastic bugs, creatures, and frogs: Dollar Tree

- Wash beans and dry them out
- Place beans in bin
- Place Fiori noodles in bin (option to dye noodles)
 - Place noodles in a plastic bag, coat with ¼ cup of vinegar and add drops of food dye
 - Shake for 5-7 minutes or until noodles are colored
 - Lay noodles on cookie sheets lined with parchment paper overnight
- Place plastic bugs or other desired toys in the bin

Options to integrate counting and cups for exploring are also good ideas!

<https://teachingmama.org/spring-sensory-bin/>

Finger Paint:

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups rice flour: \$1.99 Target

1 cup dish soap \$1 Dollar Tree

1 cup water

Food coloring (4 colors): \$3.69 Target & Walmart

- Add rice flour, dish soap, and water into a bowl
- Mix for two minutes
- Place into separate bowls to mix different colors
- Add food coloring into bowls and mix until a desired color is reached



<https://pint-sized-treasures.com/quick-easy-gluten-free-finger-paint-ready-four-minutes/>

Bubble Goo:

Ingredients:

1 cup of Corn Starch: \$0.92 Walmart for 16 oz

¼ cup of hand or dish soap: \$1 Dollar Tree

- Mix 1 cup of cornstarch and ¼ cup of dish soap
- Scented dish soap can be appealing to the senses
- The dough is malleable, moldable, and gooey



<https://www.creativeplayhouse.mumsinjersey.co.uk/2013/02/bubble-dough.html>

Gluten Free Playdough

Edible Playdough:

Ingredients:

1 cup Baby Rice Cereal: \$2.24 Walmart

Vegetable Oil: \$1 Dollar Tree

1 cup Corn Starch: \$0.92 Walmart for 16 oz

½ cup Unsweetened Applesauce: \$1.43 Walmart for 24 oz

Food coloring (4 colors): \$3.69 Target & Walmart

- Mix Baby rice cereal, corn starch, applesauce, vegetable oil and food coloring as desired
- If sticky, add more baby rice cereal
- The dough can be stored in the refrigerator



<https://www.funathomewithkids.com/2013/11/edible-gluten-free-no-cook-playdough.html>

Ice Cream Dough:

Ingredients:

Baking Soda: \$0.82 Amazon & Target

Hair Conditioner: \$1.99 Target, \$1 Dollar Tree

Kool-Aid: \$0.33 Walmart

Storage containers, bowls, or bins

- Mix 3 cups of baking soda, 3 teaspoons of hair conditioner, and a Kool Aid packet in a bin
- Add ice cream scoopers and silicone or real ice cream cones for play



<http://mommasfunworld.blogspot.com/2013/02/kool-aid-ice-cream-dough-new-sensory.html>

Cloud Dough:

Ingredients:

8 cups rice flour: \$1.99 Target

1 cup vegetable oil: \$1 Dollar Tree

Essential Oils (as desired): ~\$5 at Marshall's

- Mix the oil and rice flour together in a bowl
- Add essential oil fragrance as desired
- Place in a high-wall bin with scoopers and spoons and other utensils



<https://tinkerlab.com/gluten-free-cloud-dough/>

Edible Spinach Playdough:

Ingredients:

Bag of Spinach: \$1.54 Walmart

Box of Corn starch: \$0.92 Walmart for 16 oz

~2 tbsp of water

- Use a blender to mix the spinach with the water (can use olive oil as well)
- Once blended, knead the spinach with the corn starch
- Refrigerate after using (add a small amount of water to rewet before each use)



<http://wildflowerramblings.com/sensory-play/gluten-free-edible-spinach-play-dough-12-months-sensory-dough/>