

SUMMER SENSORY ACTIVITIES

Summer holidays can be a wonderful time for children to explore, play, and grow—but the break from routine can also sometimes feel overwhelming. Sensory activities offer a fun and therapeutic way to support their development while keeping them engaged and happy. Here are some sensory-friendly activities to try over the summer holidays:

Water Play

Why it helps: Water play provides tactile stimulation whilst also promoting fine and gross motor skills.

Ideas:

- Splash pools or water tables
- Ice cube painting
- Sensory bottles with glitter and beads

Tip: Use warm water for comfort and add safe scents like lavender for extra relaxation.



Nature Exploration

Why it helps: Being outdoors supports sensory integration of all our senses and emotional regulation.

Ideas:

- Nature scavenger hunts
- Leaf rubbings or mud painting
- Listening walks (focus on sounds like birds or rustling leaves)
- Day at the beach – collecting shells, exploring and building with the sand

Tip: Bring noise-cancelling headphones if your child is sensitive to sound.



Messy Play / Art

Why it helps: Encourages creativity and tactile exploration.

Ideas:

- Finger painting with edible paints
- Shaving foam and food colouring play
- Sand art or salt dough creations

Tip: Use a tray or mat to contain mess and make cleanup easier. Blended cereal such as Cheerio's makes sand that's safe to eat.



Sensory Bins

Why it helps: Offers focused, hands-on play that can be tailored to your child's preferences. Encourages tactile exploration and fine motor skills.

Ideas:

- Rice or pasta bins with hidden toys
- Themed bins (e.g., beach, farm, jungle)
- Add scoops, spoons, and containers for fine motor practice

Tip: Rotate themes weekly to keep things fresh.



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Music & Movement

Why it helps: Stimulates auditory and vestibular senses, and supports emotional expression.

Ideas:

- Dancing with scarves or ribbons
- Homemade instruments (shakers, drums etc)
- Sound matching games
- Blowing bubbles

Tip: Create a playlist of your child's favourite calming or energising songs.



Calm Corners and Chill Time

Why it helps: Provides a safe space for self-regulation. Heavy work/making forts and dens, promotes proprioception, which can help to feel regulated.

Ideas:

- Tent or fort with soft pillows and blankets
- Fidget toys or sensory bottles
- Guided breathing or mindfulness
- Calming music/lights

Tip: Let your child personalise their space with favourite items.



Sensory Circuits

Why it helps: Encourages movement (vestibular) and proprioceptive input whilst supporting motor planning skills.

Ideas:

- Create a homemade obstacle course e.g. jumping, balancing/walking along a line, throwing & catching, wall push ups, massage.
- Exercises that are alerting: jumping, star jumps, spinning, running, dancing (to upbeat/fast music)
- Exercises that are organising: ball skills – throwing, catching, kicking, rolling towards a target. Hopscotch, balancing, skittles.
- Exercises that are calming: massage, yoga poses, wall/chair pushes, resistance bands, pushing/pulling.

Tip: always end the circuit with a calming activity/exercise.

