

## Learning at Home

Just like at North Islington Nursery School, learning at home should be FUN and involve lots of PLAY.

This leaflet will hopefully provide you with some ideas of resources and activities that you might like to provide at home

## Babies, toddlers and the young child

Providing sensory play experiences for the very youngest child supports the development of language, cognitive growth, fine and gross motor skills, problem solving skills and provides opportunities for social interaction. Here are a few fun and exciting ways to provide sensory experiences for your child at home.

### Play Dough

A simple yet effective resource used regularly within early years' settings and great for all ages! Play dough is a calming activity that allows children to release stress while having fun at the same time! Creating with play dough lets children explore independently and provides positive emotional experiences such as competency, individuality, and innovativeness. Play dough develops fine motor skills essential for learning to hold a pen and to begin the initial stages of writing.



## Chocolate Play Dough Recipe

### Ingredients

- 2 cups plain flour
- 1 cup salt
- 1/2 cup cocoa powder
- 2 tbsps vegetable oil
- 2 tbsps cream of tartar
- 2 cups of boiling water
- 4 drops of glycerine (optional extra for increased shine and stretch)

### Method

Combine all of the dry ingredients in a bowl

Stir in the vegetable oil and mix together

Stir in the boiling water (adult only) and mix until combined

When it has cooled, knead it on a clean surface until it loses all stickiness and becomes smooth and stretchy



## Gingerbread Play Dough Recipe

### Ingredients

- 2 cups plain flour (all purpose)
- 1/2 cup salt
- 3 tbsps any oil
- 2 tbsps cream of tartar
- 1 cup of boiling water
- 1 tbsps ground ginger
- 2 tbsps ground cinnamon

### Method

Mix all dry ingredients into a bowl and add the oil

Stir in the boiling water and allow to cool

Knead into a dough. If it's still sticky, add more flour, one tablespoon at a time until it's just right!



### How to enhance your child's play dough experiences

Add rolling pins, gingerbread men cookie cutters and baking trays

Pretend to make real gingerbread men and 'bake' them in a pretend oven

Role play being bakers and sell them in bakery shop pretend play

Add buttons, beads and googly eyes and use them to add features to the gingerbread men

Read the story 'The Gingerbread Man', alongside the activity and retell the story as you play

Play dough is perfect for storytelling - say the repeated refrain "run, run as fast as you can, you can't catch me I'm the Gingerbread Man!" while you play.

### Adding tools to play dough

You can enhance your child's developmental experiences with play dough by adding tools such as rolling pins, biscuit cutters, candles and cupcake holders. This allows children to explore

and manipulate the dough and may also prompt / support children's creative ideas.



Natural resources found in the garden are a great way to allow children to explore patterns, textures and shapes.



Adding smaller objects, such as buttons and beads supports the development of fine motor skills and provides opportunities for mathematical experiences.



**After playdough why don't you try.....**

### Corn flour - 'slime'

An additional activity that will provoke your child's imagination, creativity and curiosity is through corn flour slime. Providing opportunities to explore texture and

temperature, corn flour slime will provide endless fun and exploration for your child!

You will only need a few ingredients for this;

- 1-2 cups corn flour
- A few drops of food colouring (optional)
- 1 cup of water

Corn flour slime provides a fantastic sensory experience for children and is easy to clean up afterwards!



### Cooking

Cooking is a life skill that can be taught and experienced from a young age. Providing numerous benefits to children's learning and development, cooking with young children enhances fine motor skills, increases math abilities, encourages reading skills, introduces children to scientific concepts, increases focus and attention and most of all is lots of FUN!



### Easter cookies

To continue with the Easter festivities, is an easy and fun recipes you can try with your child at home....

This is a great recipe as children can be creative when

it comes to decorating their biscuits!

### Ingredients

- 125g soft butter
- 150g caster sugar
- Pinch of salt
- 3 drops vanilla extract
- 1 egg
- 250g plain flour

### Method

Set the oven to 160C

Cream together the butter, sugar, salt and vanilla extract until the mixture is light and fluffy

Beat in the egg and flour until blended together into a dough

Roll the dough out onto a lightly floured surface (3-4mm)

Use shape cutters (any shape) to form cookie shaped dough

Place cut out cookie shapes onto lined baking paper and leave to chill for 10-15 mins

Bake for 15-20 mins, until golden around the edges

### When your cookies have cooled down.....

Ice the biscuits using this icing recipe;

- 400g icing sugar
- 3-4 tbsp water
- 2-3 drops food colouring

You can get creative when it comes to decorating your biscuits. Coloured icing, sprinkles, chocolate chips / buttons are just a few ingredients you could use.

Allow your child to get creative – explore patterns, colours

and shapes with your child as they decorate their biscuits. Enjoy!



## Discovery sensory bottles

One of the best activities to encourage sensory play are sensory bottles. Sensory bottles are easy and fun to make. You can use rice, pasta, beads, sequins, pom poms or any other small objects that will keep your kids interested. You can adapt your sensory bottles by your child's current interests.

## Make a shaker sensory bottle

Make a shaker together by filling a small bottle with small items which make interesting noises and are stimulating to watch.

- \* Let your child help you to collect and fill the bottle.
- \* You could try
  - Rice or pasta
  - Conkers and treasures from nature
  - Beads
  - Water and glitter
- \* Screw the lid on tightly and seal with cellotape.
- \* Shake, listen and watch!

## Describe to your child...

What they are doing (choosing, pouring, dropping, rattling, tapping shaking, dancing, watching)

What the shaker looks and sounds like (colourful, noisy, rattle, tsssh, click-click, swish)

How your child feels (patient, calm, excited, energetic, proud, happy, nervous, fast, slow, relaxed)

The behaviors you appreciate (considerate, careful, waiting, patience, taking turns)



This activity helps to develop your child's **fine motor skills and grasping movements**. It will also help to develop their hand-eye coordination.

Talking about colours and sounds together helps increase **vocabulary** and the development of **speech and language**.

You will also be teaching your child about sounds, beats and rhythms, colours and shapes.

Making a shaker is an enjoyable activity and can give your child a sense of achievement. When you praise and encourage them, you will be **building self-esteem and confidence**.

By enjoying this activity with siblings, they can practice **sharing and turn-taking**, along with learning to share compliments and appreciate each other.

Sensory bottles allow children to use their senses to make sense of their world, while keeping them safe and keeping clean up to a minimum.

## Homemade Edible Finger Paint

Finger paint is all about the sensory experience; squishing, swooshing and squelching. Finger paint is also about the process, being involved, having fun and exploring.

### You will need...

#### ADVERTISING

- o 2 cups of corn flour
- o 1 cup of cold water
- o 4.5 cups of boiling water
- o Liquid food colouring

### Method

In a large bowl mix the corn flour with the cold water and stir together. Pour the boiling water, one cup at a time, continuously mix. When the mixture is ready, it will be a smooth custard like consistency. Separate the mixture into different cups / jars and add your chosen food



colourings.

### Why not add...



Different tools such as; plastic forks, spoons, cars, feathers,

leaves, pinecones, and different kitchen utensils. This will enhance the painting experience and will provide your child with the opportunity to explore different shapes, textures and patterns.



### You could get creative...

Why not try creating some cardboard scrapers for the finger painting experience. Older children will enjoy joining in to help make these and it is great to practice scissor skills!

Cut zig-zags or castle tops into some pieces of cardboard to drag across your finger paint. This will create lines and patterns and squiggles!



### Freezing and Melting Objects in Ice

We have had some amazing weather recently so why not cool down with this science experiment, turning water into ice and then back again to water! This is a fun scientific investigation for children on a hot day.

This activity is great because you can use any materials /

resources that you wish. Children will have a fantastic time exploring outside, finding natural resources to freeze, a great way to get outside and enjoy the sunny weather!

Use any shape and sized container and half fill with water. Add your objects to the water and freeze.

### What learning is taking place?

Sensory ice play is a great way for children to explore and learn about scientific concepts. Through Knowledge and understanding, children investigate how water turns to ice and then melts again. They learn about materials changing from liquids to solids and then to liquid again.

Children will using problem solving skills to determine how to remove the objects from the blocks of ice. Children will observe, make predictions, learning about cause an effect.

By adding simple tools, such as plastic forks, knives, sticks, children will be able to manipulate the ice. This will also help to build gross and fine motor skills in chiseling, chipping and bashing at the ice. You could also combine different materials to explore and make change.

Why not add salt and water to



the ice and observe the effects.

**Ice play is a great way to explore numbers and letter sounds...**

Set out the invitation and leave your child to it. Let them explore the feel of the ice, especially in contrast with the water. They might count, they might set up a pretend play story; it's always interesting to sit back and see what they come up with. Having the numbers as part of the materials available is a way to gently introducing counting and math.

Challenge your child to catch a number three, or a number that's one more than four.

See if you can line up the slippery ice numbers in ascending or descending order.

Fish out two numbers and see



if you can say which is the biggest, or try and add them together.

Challenge your child to catch the 's' sound, or the letter 'a.'

Catch different letter sounds and create CVC words and read them aloud together 'c-a-t'

Freeze objects that start with different sounds and challenge



you r child to find the object that begins with the sound 'f' (flower) or the sound 'c' (car)

**We hope you enjoy trying  
some of these activities.  
We will be adding more  
later this week**

**Take care and happy  
playing!**