

## 6 Great Sensory DIY Projects for our ASD Kiddos

By Dawn O'Brien

Many of our ASD Kiddos have something called Sensory Processing Disorder or SPD. This means that many have problems with sensory processing. They have a harder time organizing information from the senses. Sights, sounds, smells, flavours and textures can make them over or under responsive. So far there is no evidence that our children will grow out of SPD But we can help them grow into it. Here are some fun DIY ideas to help keep your children busy while working on their hand eye coordination and fine motor skills.

### Sensory Tubs (or bins)

Creating various sensory tubs is a great way for our children to explore their sense of touch. The tubs minimize mess and keep all the items contained. I suggest making each bin a different colour. This will help your child be able to tell you which bin they want. Add the name or description of the bin to the outside as this will assist with reading. If you are going to have the bins on the floor for play you might want to be a shower curtain on the ground for containment. Keep a separate tub filled with measuring cups, spoons, plastic cups, toy shovels, anything you can think of for pouring, filling and general fun. You can also Add scent to some of your bins if they fit the theme. Dried lavender is a really great way to add a calming.

#### A) Dried Beans

Dried Beans in various sizes are wonderful for a sensory experience. They have a great feel and weight to them and make an interesting rattle sound inside of containers. They are easy to pour and also offer easy clean up.

#### B) Dried Pastas in all shapes

Pastas come in so many great shapes and sizes and colours. They also hold the scent of essential oils very well. Before adding oils do your research or talk to someone who sells oils such as Doterra or Young Living. They will be able to tell you which are safe and kid friendly. Stay away from spaghetti style pastas as they snap and can poke. Who wouldn't want to play with a tub of Bowtie pastas?

#### C) Flax Seeds, Quinoa, Chia Seeds

Combined together these all work together to have a nice weight and texture. These pour and move around similar to sand but thicker and heavier.

#### **D) Themes**

Putting together Theme Tubs can be so much fun and you can let your creative juices flow. The more things you add to the tubs the better.

#### **E) Beach Fun**

Sand, small shovels, pails, dried starfish, shells and all things beachy. Add water to the sand and suddenly indoor sandcastles can be built.

#### **F) Zoo Animals/Farm Animals**

This is a great way to involve your kiddo in the creation of the tubs. You can take a trip to the dollar store and let them choose the animals or the pieces to go into the tubs.

#### **G) Underwater Aquarium**

This is perhaps my very favorite Tub. Multi-coloured aquarium gravel, glass stones, wood, plastic plants and plastic fish all combined together to make hours of fun. Again you can add water to this tub for a different sensory experience.

### **It's in the Bag**

This sensory game is so much fun that you will want to involve the entire family. All you need is a paper bag, several interestingly shaped item and get ready for fun. Place the item (or items) in the Bag. Let you child feel the outside of the Bag and try to guess what is inside. Then let them reach inside without looking. Let them feel the item and guess what the item is. This works with their fine motor skills, tactile processing and shape recognition. It also helps with their language skills as they try to describe what they feel.

### **Water Beads**

Water Beads have so many sensory applications. Water Beads are usually found at florists or plant stores as they are mainly used for putting plants or flowers in. They come in a huge array of colours which makes them a feast for the eye. They are squishy, watery and can be played

with in so many ways. If you place a bunch into a non inflated balloon it adds another sensory dimension.

## Rice Crispies

This one was suggested by a friend who's non verbal daughter loves the sound of Rice Crispies. In a tub or bin just pour in the Crispies and let your child add water as they go. It starts off as a crunchy hard bin, moves into a wonderful popping and snapping sound and ends up a smooshy mushy finish. I suggest this one be played with outside as the Crispies do go flying!

## Scents and Sights

This is another great activity suggested to me by a parent. Scent Cards are fun to make and can be used over and over again. You will need recipe cards, tiny zip lock bags (from a craft store) various smelly things and a jar of coffee beans. Use things like dried lavender, cloves, sage, pine needles, cinnamon, mint, the sky really is the limit. Place the items to be smelled in the small bags and attach them to the card. Double sided tape is the best way. With a Sharpie write the name of the smell on the card. This way when the item is smelled there is a word that goes with it, helping to build words and scents.

## Make Flubber

The making of Flubber can be as much fun as it is to play with it. Flubber flows under low stress but break under pressure. It's super easy to make using Water, glue and Borax. Here is the recipe.

### Ingredients

- ¾ cup cold water
- 1 cup of Elmers Glue
- ½ cup hot water
- 1 teaspoon of Borax (find it in the laundry aisle)
- Liquid food colouring

**Step one** - In a bowl mix together the cold Water, glue and food colouring, set aside

**Step two** - In another bowl mix hot water and the borax until the borax is completely dissolved

**Step three** - Slowly add the glue mixture to the borax mixture and mix well. Pour off any excess water. Store the Flubber in a well sealed Tupperware style container.

I hope these simple DIY ideas for Sensory Fun will set you on a path of greater exploration for you and your child.