

Waterplay

Description : For children with ASD or difficulties with over stimulation or sensory issues, waterplay can help relax children during tantrums and regularly throughout the day. This activity is to help parents/caregivers build their own waterplay area for their child using common household materials.

Develops : Self-regulation, sensory stimulation through touch and senses of temperature.



Instructions :

1. Collect a plastic bin or container that can hold water and is deep enough to hold at least 3 inches of water with at least twice the amount of empty space above (in the photos a refrigerator drawer is used).
2. Collect items of different textures to be used in the waterplay bin. Balloons and sponges are excellent. In the example balloons, bubble wrap, a hairbrush, sponges, and a plastic, infant's toy are used.
3. Fill the bin with a few inches of water. You might need to experiment with your child about what temperature they prefer for the water. Some children enjoy tap cold water while others prefer lukewarm.
4. If you are using balloons, fill the balloon(s) with water, sand, or beads and tie them up. Only fill them enough so that they can fit in your child's hands.
5. Cut sponges so that they also fit in your child's hands.
6. Place all the bin with water on the floor somewhere where any splashing will not cause a great deal of mess or damage, then place all the items in the bin.
7. When your child begins playing with the water try to stay relatively close (within reach) to your child. As your child continues play you will be able to move back and focus less directly on them.
8. Some children become upset when it is time to stop playing and the water is removed suddenly. When it is nearing the time for another activity one possible strategy is to slowly add more water of the opposite temperature (so warm water if they like it cold or cold water if they like it warm). This will gradually inform the child that a transition is about to take place. **NOTE: this is only one possible strategy that works with some children. You will have to figure out what is effective your child.**
9. You can repeat this exercise as needed reusing the different items after they have been cleaned. Some children will continue with this activity from 10 - 45 minutes often depending on when the water temperature reaches a level that is no longer appealing to them.

