



## The Purpose of Play: Developing Skills at the Sensory Table

### Mediums & Materials:

- Rice
- Water
- Leaves
- Snow
- Sand (wet or dry)
- Play dough
- Cotton balls
- Beans
- Whole corn kernels
- Ice cubes
- Cups
- Scoops
- Cars
- Tongs
- Seashells
- PVC plumbing joints
- Buttons
- Ping Pong Balls
- Plastic eggs
- And so much more!!!

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### The purpose of sensory play

Sensory experiences are an important part of children's development. Many of young children's favorite activities such as digging in the sand or pouring water are sensory activities. Young children learn best through hands-on experiences.

### Sensory play at home

You can easily create your own sensory table at home by filling a large container, such as a dish pan or plastic tote, with items such as rice, dried beans, water, or sand. Provide children with items such as scoops or cups, plastic cars, animals, or other items of interest to them. The plastic cars might leave tracks in sand, while cups and scoops allow for experiences with measuring and volume. Picking up cotton balls with clothespins builds fine motor skills. The opportunities are endless!

### What are children learning at the sensory table?

Children learn many things from sensory play. Activities can be intentionally designed to support certain areas of development. Some examples include:

- Math skills: size, counting, matching, classifying, sorting. Concepts such as full/empty, less/more, sink/float
- Science skills: cause and effect, gravity, mixing solids and liquids, problem solving, making observations and predications, responding to findings
- Fine motor skills: supported by using small tools such as tongs, scissors, scoops, pouring, etc.

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