

SENSORY BINS



This fun, easy activity invites young children to explore contrasting sensory experiences

PRACTICE INTENTIONAL OBSERVATION AND PERSPECTIVE-TAKING

“It looks like you’re having fun pouring the sand.”

“I wonder if you like the shaving cream sticking to your hands.”

MATERIALS

- bins ○ sand (or dry oatmeal for very young children)
- shaving cream (or sugar free whipped cream for very young children) ○ scoopers or plastic cups (optional)

STEPS

- 1 Fill one bin with sand or dry oatmeal and one with shaving cream or whipped cream.
- 2 Invite the child to explore the bins at their own pace.
- 3 Intentionally observe how the child explores and plays with the sensory materials, as well as the intensity of their reactions.
- 4 Notice the child’s cues and what they communicate about what sensory materials they seem to like or dislike.

WHAT’S THE “WHY” OF THIS ACTIVITY?

Gradually exposing young children to a broader range of sensory experiences can build their ability to navigate unfamiliar or mildly stressful activities or environments.

Observing what sensory experiences are regulating or dysregulating from the child’s perspective can help us anticipate what activities might be engaging and enjoyable for them and when they might need more support or co-regulation.