



5 Super Sensory Outdoor Play Activities

Ideal for explorers ages 2–8

Kids use their sensory system to gather and process information from the environment—what could be more fundamental to learning? How your child’s various senses are stimulated and balanced with one another dictates how they experience the world, which, in turn, impacts how they feel, behave and learn.

The play environments we set up and support can make a huge difference in helping kids strengthen and balance their sensory systems. Fortunately, there is one classroom that is inherently both stimulating and soothing to kids’ senses—the great outdoors!

Scroll to try out our top 5 activities designed to support your child’s sensory system!

Follow Us!



Enroll!



Join Our Team!



Join Our Community!





5 Super Sensory Outdoor Play Activities

Ideal for explorers ages 2–8

Kids use their sensory system to gather and process information from the environment—what could be more fundamental to learning? How your child's various senses are stimulated and balanced with one another dictates how they experience the world, which, in turn, impacts how they feel, behave and learn.

The play environments we set up and support can make a huge difference in helping kids strengthen and balance their sensory systems. Fortunately, there is one classroom that is inherently both stimulating and soothing to kids' senses—the great outdoors!

Scroll to try out our top 5 activities designed to support your child's sensory system!

Follow Us!



Enroll!



Join Our Team!



Join Our Community!



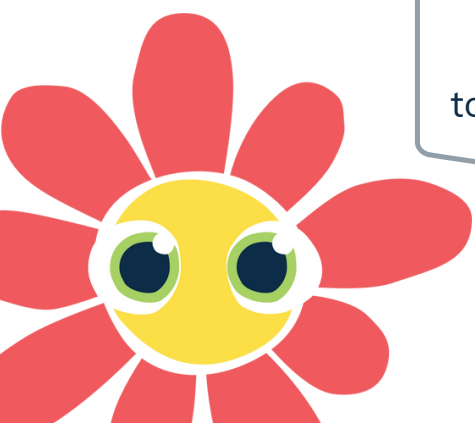


Mud Play

The simple act of making and exploring mud captivates young people worldwide (and is not bad for us big kids, either). Yes, kids get messy. And different kids bring different [mindsets to mud play](#). But, with few exceptions, when given the okay to approach it in their own way, kids of all ages get completely absorbed in mud play.

Playing and experimenting with ooey, gooey mud helps children to strengthen multiple senses, especially their sense of touch. And, we know that the better kids are able to [tune and integrate their senses](#), the more effectively they can learn. Once your child knows how to make and manipulate mud, they have a tool for creative play and building with virtually unlimited uses.

The great news for grown ups is that you can do this almost anywhere too. With the most basic of materials (water + dirt!) and armed with a few tips, parents can help unleash the rich learning potential in mud.



Tag us
@tinkergarten
to share your play

[View DIY](#)

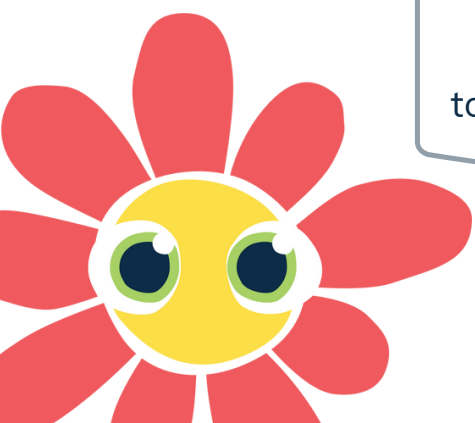


Ice & Water Play

Water offers endless invitations for play for kids of all ages because, no matter how sensitive a child is to sensory input, water is simultaneously stimulating and calming, making it an ideal material for sensory play. Add ice, and you'll immediately tune in multiple senses and welcome experimentation and discovery.

All you need to do is freeze water in various containers, adding colors, if you like. Then, add the ice to a bucket of water. It's that simple to provide water play with an even more heightened sensory experience—and an especially refreshing way to play in warmer months!

You'll also offer the chance for your child to explore [STEM concepts](#) like sinking and floating or the various states of matter. Click on the link below to see a list of our favorite ways to help kids make lasting discoveries as they play with ice and water.



Tag us
@tinkergarten
to share your play

[View DIY](#)

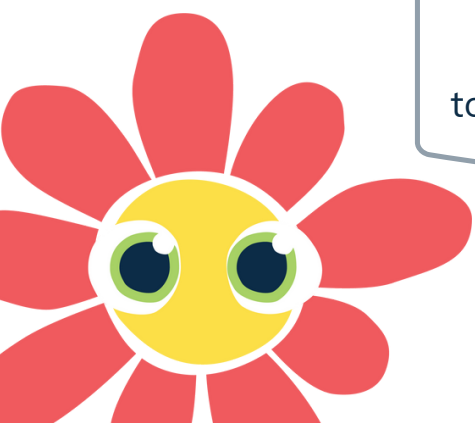


Sheet Sensation

Nature is full of color, and with a few simple tools, your child can transform an ordinary sheet into a vibrant display of the palette of pigments in your biome! Just grab an old bed sheet, towel or even a few pieces of paper and welcome your child to mash, smash and mix natural ingredients to release their pigments. Just wait for the joy you'll see!

As they play, kids will activate their senses of sight, smell and touch. They'll also enjoy a surprisingly vigorous physical workout for what may appear like an art project. So much learning during the early years takes place through direct physical experience, and this activity calls on your child's whole body.

This activity also offers sensory stimulation without actually being overwhelming. Best of all, it's good, [productive, messy fun](#) -- creative and gratifying for all involved.



Tag us
@tinkergarten
to share your play

[View DIY](#)

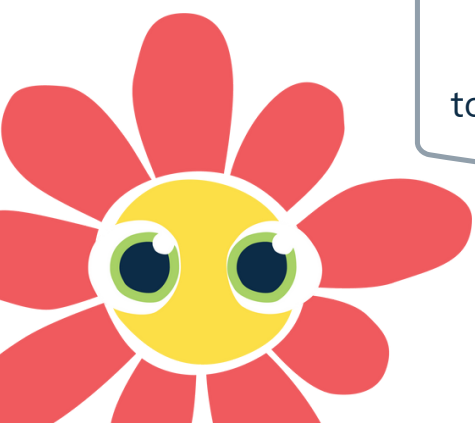


Bubble Joy

Bubbles are magical, especially to kids. They are known to [spark joy](#) in even the most grumpy humans, too. Bubbles are also marvelous tools for awakening kids' senses and inviting creative yet “clean” messy play. All you need is a bin of water and some liquid dish soap.

If you want to go deeper with older explorers, you can even make your own [bubble juice recipes](#) and test out how various recipes impact the bubbles you produce.

No matter how you play, welcome your child to feel the silky texture on their hands. How do the popping bubbles feel? How do they sound? How can you create different bubbles? Catch them? Grab your bubbles, head outside and try these different ways to spark wonder through bubble play.



Tag us
@tinkergarten
to share your play

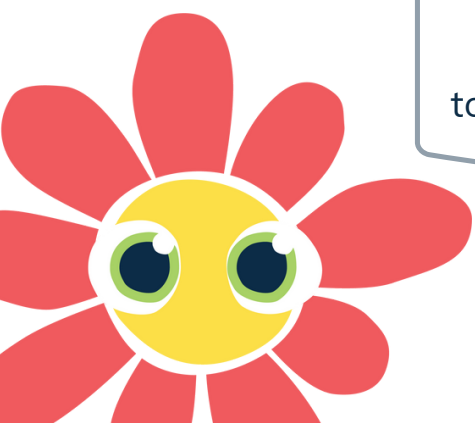
[View DIY](#)



Obstacle Course

Obstacle courses are a forever favorite in many homes and can easily add some adventure to kids' active outdoor play. All you need is space to move and a few objects from nature or around the house. Once you set up your first course, even the youngest explorer can start to change, add to and build new challenges into the course. It's never ending play—and outdoors is the perfect playscape for such physical challenges!

As your child moves their body and head in different ways throughout the course, they'll activate two "hidden senses" that are important for feeling grounded and ready to learn. What are these two senses? The [vestibular system](#) and [proprioception](#). These senses both involve movement and support balance, coordination and focus, and, even though we often overlook them, they have a major impact on how young kids learn. Plus, obstacle courses are just good, clean (or, if you're outside, a little dirty) fun!



Tag us
@tinkergarten
to share your play

[View DIY](#)

Bonus: Just Between Us Grown Ups



Messy Play Support Group

Laugh and learn some strategies for making messy play manageable..

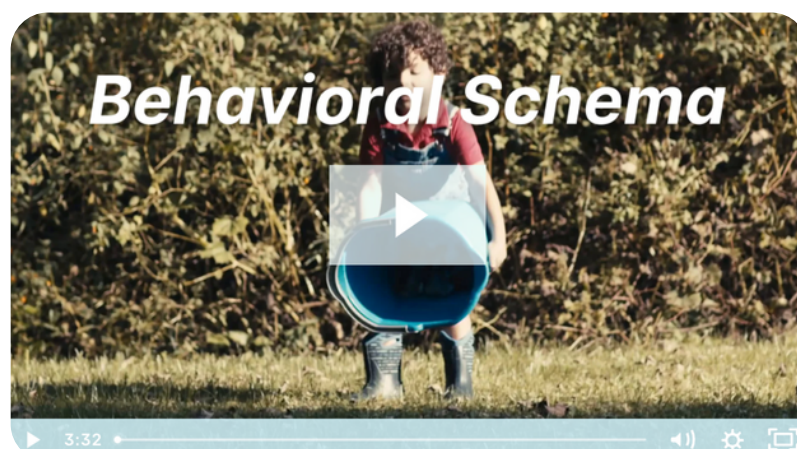
[Watch](#)



Why Messy Play?

Hear from kids and Tinkergarten why (and how) messy play is great for kids.

[Watch](#)



Behavioral Schema

Learn about universal patterns in kids' play that help boost their learning!

[Watch](#)

Get Your
Free
Activity
Calendar!

Join a
Summer
Class or Try
Tinkergarten!



Follow Us!



@Tinkergarten, Inc. 2022

Enroll!



Join Our
Team!



Join Our
Community!

