



Under the sea

Ocean adventures

Sensory Play

- Sensory play encourages children to manipulate and mold materials, building up their fine motor skills and coordination.
- Sensory play uses all 5 senses, but the sense of touch is often the most frequent. Toddlers and children process information through their senses. They learn through exploring these.
- Sensory play is unstructured, open-ended, not product-oriented; it is the purest sense of exploratory learning
- Self-esteem: sensory play offers kids the opportunity for self-expression because there is no right answer and children feel safe to change or experiment with what they are doing.
- Language development- experimenting with language and descriptive words.
- Develop social skills: practising negotiation skills, turn taking and sharing. Provides opportunities for working out problems and experimenting with solutions.
- Encourages Imagination and creative play.

Development

Dr Maria Montessori was Italy's first trained female General Physician. She had an interest in the needs of the mentally & disabled children. It was probably with the birth of her own son that sparked the interest to how she would pour her life & energies into studying the needs of children.

Montessori was particularly interested in how play developed the mind, body, brain & senses in terms of

1. gaining greater awareness of properties through use of the bodily senses.
2. sharpening abilities to gather & organise information.
3. organise sensory impression (through use of Practical Life & Sensorial activities).

Maria Montessori believed that there is a sensitive period for developing the senses. Although the senses are an integral part of our lives, children during the early years, have the greatest potential to develop and refine them. It is precisely this idea that demonstrates the purpose of Sensorial materials in the Montessori classroom. The Sensorial materials are powerful tools, which allow a child to become aware of his unconscious impressions and bring those impressions in to conscious awareness. Additionally, they enable the child to create a basis of order in his mind allowing for intelligent exploration of his environment.

Montessori was influenced by the sensorial equipment designs of Itard and Seguin who used these materials while working with disabled children. It was Montessori, however, who developed her own pedagogy to incorporate the materials to enhance the development of all children. Use of the Sensorial materials aids children in developing and refining each of the senses. Consequently, a better understanding of the world arises as the child is able to describe and articulate all that he observes. Furthermore, the sensorial experiences create for the child an acute awareness of the beauty that surrounds him.



When playing with sensory items, some items can be smaller than normal and pose a choking hazard with babies and toddlers particularly. Please remember to complete Risk Assessments and ensure supervision is paramount at all times.

 **Ocean adventures**
Babies

Babies are born with a brain full of neurons. Learning about the world through the five senses develops pathways between these neurons. The more of one type of experience the baby (and child) has, the stronger the pathway becomes. The stronger the pathway, the easier it is for a child to learn more about that part of the world, not just for now but for life. Pathways that are not used often, will eventually disappear.

Ocean Bottles (1.2, 1.4, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.4)

Add gemstones and seashells to a plastic bottle, filling it $\frac{3}{4}$ full of water (you don't want to make the bottle too heavy with too much water) and adding a drop of blue food colouring. Then add about a teaspoon of glitter and a handful of star sequins. Secure the lid tightly with a dab of glue from the hot glue gun or by wrapping the top with coloured electrical tape. Babies will enjoy looking, shaking and rolling the bottle. Perfect for crawlers too as they can chase the rolling sparkly bottle around.

Frozen Ocean Sensory Bin (1.2, 1.4, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.4)

You will need containers, sea theme plastic animals, a large tub, food colouring and water. Using a variety of recycled, different shaped size containers, fill them with water and put them into the freezer. The ice blocks will form part of the icy ocean. Yoghurt containers, empty biscuit trays, bottle lids, make great patterned ice shapes. The blue food dye can either be added to the shapes prior or after freezing to give the nice blue ocean effect.

Provide lots of ocean animals for the babies to explore and ensure lots of discussion about the names of the ocean critters. Also discuss key words like 'cold' and 'freezing' as descriptive words for the babies to grasp.

Deep Goop Sea (1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.4)

Playing with Cornflour Goop is an activity that can be enjoyed by children of all ages, and can assist in the development of both cognitive and fine motor skills. It is a strange substance that will leave children fascinated as it feels quite firm when picked up, but then quickly becomes liquid and streams between little fingers.

Resources:

- 2 packs of cornflour
- 2 cups of water
- Food colouring
- Plastic Sea Creatures
- Buckets, Spades, Shovels etc

Steps

1. Mix cornflour and water together in a large container
2. Add food colouring if desired

Add the sea creatures, buckets and spades and let the children enjoy the texture of the goop along with their creations of messy ocean environments.

 **Ocean adventures**
Toddlers

As toddlers watch and listen to what goes on around them, they soon go beyond the infant reflex reaction to participating with greater awareness and planning in what they see, hear, touch, taste, and smell. They discriminate between shapes and sounds and learn what to expect and what to reach for. They formulate whole images by synthesising sensory information. Towards the child's second year, they connect these images with words, so they can begin to ask for what they want. But the process of connecting words and images is much slower than the development of the images themselves.

Extensions**Ocean Bottles** (1.2, 1.4, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.4)

- Encourage children to pour the water and mix the food dye
- Provide a variety of shells, gemstones, glitter and sequins for the children to create their own ocean bottle.
- Educator to assist with taping the lids on.
- Encourage descriptive language with the children
 - How is this ocean bottle like the "real" ocean?
 - What colours, shapes and images can we see?
 - What can we imagine?

Frozen Ocean Sensory Bin (1.2, 1.4, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.4)

- Encourage children to discover how to remove the frozen ice from the containers
- Provide children with resources – plastic sea animals, colour food dye – what will your frozen ocean look like? What should we include?
- Discuss key words – frozen, cold, ice, ocean, sea, fish, animals. How many words can we discover? Lets make a word cloud and jot down all of the children's ideas.

Deep Goop Sea (1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.4)

- Have ingredients ready and allow children to mix ingredients through and add food colouring to watch the colour change.
 - What colour did the children select for the ocean?
- The texture of the goop is quite different to what the children are used to, so Educators can open discussions about how it "feels".
 - Create a word cloud or jot down the children's voices about the goop activity.
- Provide children with a variety of sea creatures to add to their Sea.
 - Which animals would the children include
 - Do the children know the names of the sea animals? What other sea creatures do they know?

Ocean adventures

Toddlers

Octopus Craft (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.4, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 5.1, 5.4)



Octopus is a fascinating creature for the children to watch. These are simple paper plate and pasta octopus craft activities. Not only are they fun to make, but they also provides all kinds of fine motor practice and can be done over and over!

Resources:

- Paper plates
- Single hole punch
- Pipe cleaners
- Markers
- Rigatoni pasta (Some rigatoni is wider than others. If you want your pasta to stay on the pipe cleaners, be sure to use the skinnier rigatoni/macaroni)

Steps: Remember to dye the pasta before using it for this craft!

1. Draw an octopus face on your paper plate. (Children might enjoy doing this on his/her own!)
2. Punch eight holes along the bottom rim of the paper plate.
3. Twist one pipe cleaner into each hole.
4. Leave a bowl of coloured rigatoni pasta nearby for the children to use. (If you don't have pasta, you can also cut up straws into small pieces to use instead.)

The children will enjoy trying to thread through the pasta or straws to create their final masterpiece. The children may also like to decorate their own octopus as they like so ensure that there are plenty of collage resources available.

Lets Go Fishing (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.2, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 5.1)



- Carefully plan your environment and invite the children to your fishing trip.
- Have rods, fish etc ready to go before you introduce the environment to the children. All resources should be available from where the children can simply immerse themselves into play immediately
- What sorts of fun will you have with your fishing trip? Are you camping? Are you going to cook fish and chips? Will anyone swim with the fish? What should we wear? How many fish did we catch?
- Encourage lots of open-ended discussions with the children as they enjoy this wonderful dramatic play activity.

 **Ocean adventures**
Pre-schoolers

The link between sensory play and self-regulation is a critical building block in early childhood development. By providing children with extensive sensory play activities, Educators are ensuring a best possible start for all children.

Self-regulation skills are linked to how well children manage many tasks during early childhood. With these skills, children are more able to manage difficult and stressful events that occur as part of life, such as loss of a pet, death of a family member or family separation. This helps to decrease the ongoing impact of stress that can contribute to mental health difficulties.

As a child learns to self-regulate, skills such as concentrating, sharing and taking turns also develop. This enables a child to move from depending on others to beginning to manage by themselves.

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- Educator to assist with taping the lids on.
- Encourage descriptive language with the children
 - How is this ocean bottle like the “real” ocean?
 - What colours, shapes and images can we see?
 - What can we imagine?
 - What sorts of creatures will be in your Ocean bottle?
 - Which animals can live in the Ocean?
 - I wonder how they breathe under water? How are these animals different to land creatures – categorise animals and jot down the children’s voices

Frozen Ocean Sensory Bin (1.2, 1.4, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.4)

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- Provide children with resources – plastic sea animals, colour food dye – what will your frozen ocean look like? What should we include?
- Discuss key words – frozen, cold, ice, ocean, sea, fish, animals. How many words can we discover? Lets make a word cloud and jot down all of the children’s ideas.
- What animals will belong in the frozen ocean – do we know where the ocean might freeze? What other animals can live in freezing temperatures?
- How might we dress if we visited places like Antarctica?
- How did the water freeze? What liquids freeze? How can we melt ice?

Ocean adventures

Pre-schoolers

Extensions

Deep Goop Sea (1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.4)

- Have ingredients available with a “recipe” and see if children can create the goop with the set instructions.
- Have food dye close by – allow the children to create their own mix. What colour did the children select for the ocean? Why?
- The texture of the goop is quite different to what the children are used to, so Educators can open discussions about how it “feels”. What other “feeling” words do we know?
 - Create a word cloud or jot down the children’s voices about the goop activity.
- Provide children with a variety of sea creatures to add to their Sea.
 - Which animals would the children include
 - Do the children know the names of the sea animals? What other sea creatures do they know? What other environments/habitats are the children aware of? Can we categorise and document the children’s voices?

Octopus Craft (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.4, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 5.1, 5.4)

- The children may be able to punch their own holes in the paper plate. How many holes will we need? How many legs (tentacles) does their Octopus have?
- Children can thread the string through and select pasta or straws etc. They may need some help knotting the ends.

Lets go Fishing (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.2, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 5.1, 5.4)



- The children can plan their fishing trip and discuss what items we would need to bring
- Educators can document and create lists for the children. How will the children allocate tasks?
- Children can assist the Educators to set up their fishing environment – what items are needed to make this a fun experience? Will we set this up indoors/outdoors and why?
- What happens if we don’t catch any fish? Will we eat the fish that we catch? Does anybody have some yummy recipes?
- Educators may also wish to incorporate some more fine motor activities for this age group also... like this fishbowl activity below...

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Pre-schoolers

Foil Fish (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.2, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 5.1)



Resources:

- Card / min 180gsm paper
- Foil
- Markers, pencils, oil pastels or acrylic paint

Steps:

1. Begin by drawing a fish shape on a piece of card and cutting it out. You can look in an ocean information book to discover all the different shapes that fish can be. Perhaps the children can have a go at drawing or cutting out the fish themselves.

2. Then wrap the fish in foil – kitchen foil wrap is fine, nothing fancy! You can tear the foil a little, and fold and scrunch it, to get it to fit your fish shape. The children should be able to complete this step with a little guidance.

3. Once the fish is covered in the foil it's then time to add the designs. Children can choose what materials they would like to use - acrylic paint, oil pastel crayons or permanent markers.

4. What will we decide to do with them once they are complete – can we make a room mobile, will we create an underwater group collage? Survey the children to discover what they prefer to do... some children will simply prefer to take them home to show their loved ones.



 Ocean adventures

Linking to Outcomes

Babies

- 1.1 Children feel safe, secure, and supported.
- 1.2 Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.
- 1.4 Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.
- 3.1 Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing.
- 4.1 Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity.
- 4.2 Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating.
- 4.3 Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another.
- 5.1 Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.

Toddlers

- 1.1 Children feel safe, secure, and supported.
- 1.2 Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.
- 1.3 Children develop knowledgeable and confident self identities.
- 1.4 Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.
- 2.2 Children respond to diversity with respect.
- 2.4 Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.
- 3.1 Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing.
- 4.1 Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity.
- 4.2 Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating.
- 4.3 Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another.
- 4.4 Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials.
- 5.1 Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.
- 5.4 Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work.

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