

A stylized, colorful illustration of a landscape. The foreground features rolling green hills with a dark brown path. On the left, there is a green tree, a purple flower, and an orange flower. A red bird is flying in the sky. The background consists of layered blue and white waves, suggesting a sky or water. The overall style is flat and modern.

Let's Play DIRTY!

Reviving "Messy Play" Experiences

*Carolyn Surry-Middleton
Trainer#1153*

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Features of “Messy Play”

- Hands-on (not watching others)
- Includes tactile sensory experience
- Focus on exploration, experimentation, and process more than creating product
- May spill, splash, fall apart, get on clothing or floor.
- Not necessarily wet, sticky, or stain-making

What's the value?

- Children need to learn by active exploration and experiences
- Sensory/messy play can promote learning in **MANY** curriculum areas!

What is learned?

- Language
- Cognitive/Math
- Science
- Literacy
- Motor Coordination
- Art
- Self-help/Adaptive Behavior
- Social Skills



Planning

- What materials do I need?
- Best location?
- Format?
- Time of day?
- Preparation: activity, parents, kids
- Anticipate accidents!
- How will we clean up?



Items to consider.....



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Learning from science.

“Tips & Tricks” from Allison Sonnier*

1. Establish boundaries
2. Teach children what TO do, demonstrate & practice
3. Start simple, limit supplies
4. Teach children to clean up after themselves
5. Choose time of day that works for you
6. Supervise closely
7. Have a clean-up plan ready
8. Take messy play outside

*<http://www.learnplayimagine.com/2013/02/tips-and-tricks-for-messy-play-from.html>

Playful Spirit

- Very important!
- Have realistic expectations for kids
- What will your conclusion be if things don't go as planned?
- Have fun!



Different Levels of “Mess”

- Dry
 - Pompoms
 - feathers
 - packing materials
 - Ribbons
 - birdseed
 - shredded paper
 - rice
 - beans
 - corn
 - pasta
 - oatmeal
 - nature items



Simple Messy (one ingredient or substance)

- Water
- Sand
- Play dough
- Potting soil
- Ice cubes



More Complex Messy (multiple ingredients or gooier consistency)

- Corn starch & water
- Shaving cream
- Paint or finger paint
- Mud/"white mud"
- Jello
- Pudding



Can infants and young toddlers do messy sensory play?

- YES!
- Be mindful of choking hazards
- Use materials that won't harm if put in mouth
- Keep it simple





Sensory play is vitally important for children's learning.

You can do this!

The more you do it, the more comfortable you will become.

Just Do It!!!