

# BUDDING EXPLORERS

## USING SENSORY PLAY TO ENCOURAGE INFANTS TO EXPLORE THEIR ENVIRONMENT.

Experts say that creating opportunities for children, especially babies, to actively use their senses to explore the environment around them helps build nerve connections in the brain. This in turn supports their cognitive, language, social-emotional and motor skills development.

With this understanding, Ms Koh Gek Hong, an educator at My First Skool at Yishun Blk 612, observed that more could be done to intentionally engage the infants. She decided to initiate a Practitioner Inquiry (PI) project to further encourage active exploration in infants.

### PROVOKING THE SENSES

As part of the project, the infants explored pots and pans with wooden spoons. The educators observed that while the infants practised large muscle movements by banging on the utensils, they were also listening to the different sounds produced. These

“At the parents' workshop, I learned to make sensory bottles with recycled materials to let my child explore sound and colour. The teachers shared techniques on how we can encourage active exploration such as giving my child more tummy time to strengthen his core. These activities definitely helped in strengthening parent-child bonding.”

**MDM EUNICE GRACE CHAN,**  
mother of Joseph Issac Goh,  
12 months



A bubble wrap 'runway' motivates babies to move and explore



Babies experience different textures as they explore the sensory tunnels

stimulate thinking, which is part of cognitive development.

The centre also created simple open-ended materials to motivate babies to move and explore. For example, they made sensory tunnels with different textured materials and covered a bubble wrap 'runway' with different non-toxic paint colours for babies to experience the different sections as they moved across.

### DEVELOPING LANGUAGE

Educators play a vital role, says Ms Koh. "While it is important to provide these experiences for infants, we can support their language and thinking when we



Hitting pots and pans train large muscle movements and stimulate thinking

## DIY SENSORY TOYS

Ms Koh and her fellow educators share how you can customise your own sensory toys from household and recycled items.

### Spider Web Discovery Basket

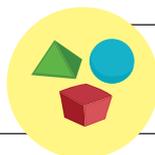
Weave string over the top of a toy-filled laundry basket, leaving gaps for little hands to reach in. This promotes hand-eye coordination and thinking skills.

### Rolling Ramp

Cut off both ends of two plastic bottles and tape over the sharp edges. Your child can slide balls inside and observe these roll down. This reinforces fine motor skills and exposes the child to the concept of cause and effect.

### Sensory Bags

Fill a Ziploc bag with beads, pom-poms, plastic flowers or other items, and let your child squeeze and manipulate these objects. While he strengthens the muscles in his fingers and hands, you can introduce new words and expand his vocabulary.



### Want To Start Your Own Practitioner Inquiry Journey?

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