



Dear Parents/Carers

It's a child's world! Have fun with your Little one and support them boost development, both inside and outdoors play.

Messy Play.... We will be sending you weekly ideas to support.

While they're busy squishing and squelching, pouring and pushing, they're carrying out an endless stream of experiments to find out about their world. And that's why it keeps them so occupied - give your little one some toy trucks and they will be busy for 10 minutes, but give her some trucks and a tray of rice to drive them through and they will come up with new ways to play all afternoon!

- **Boosts child development:** Not only will all this working out how to play grow her brain, it'll also provide her with lots of opportunities to refine her fine motor skills.*
- **Language skills:** Because how can she know what the word 'slimy' really means if she can't feel the sensation for herself?*
- **Imagination:** While a toy that rewards a press of a button with a burst of music can only be played within one way, a tub of goo creates infinite possibilities.*

And because all these recipes are so easy to make, and use cheap ingredients you've probably already got in your cupboards, you'll be happy to ditch the lot at the end of a happy day's play and whip up a batch of something new next time.



Messy Play

Keep your child under close supervision at all times. All these suggestions are intended for a parent and child to play together.

Jelly Play Dough recipe

This is a sweet-smelling treat. It's made using jelly crystals and makes deliciously scented, soft dough in ice cream colours. Make up a few batches using different flavoured jellies and use it to cut out 'cookies', bake 'cakes' or set up an 'ice-cream stall'.

You will need:

- 175g flour*
- 85g salt*
- 23g sachet of Hartley's Jelly crystals*
- 1 tbsp cream of tartar*
- 225ml water*
- 2 tbsp veg oil*

Directions:

- Put all the dry ingredients into a saucepan and mix.*
- Pour on the water and oil. Mix until there are no lumps.*
- Place over a low heat, stirring all the while. Keep scraping the dough from the bottom of the pan as it forms. This will take 3-4 minutes.*
- Remove from the heat, cool for five minutes.*
- Knead for three minutes on a chopping board.*

Use the supermarket's own-brand value products to make these recipes for very little cost. Plain Flour costs 45p for 1.5kg and Table Salt costs 25p for 1kg.



Messy Play

Rice Krispies

If your youngster is still getting to grips with figuring out how this funny thing called gravity works, then there is no better medium for his experiments than a tub of Rice Krispies. Pushing toys into the rice will help him learn that things don't disappear just because he can't see them. Add beakers and bowls, a scoop and a cardboard tube, or nothing at all, and let him discover the satisfying crunch a tiny puff of rice makes when crushed between a little finger and thumb. Easy to vacuum up too!

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Messy Play

Rainbow spaghetti

A tub of these wriggly worms makes for great fine motor skills practice, and the sensory experience is unlike any other! Pull a worm to see how much it stretches. Chop it up with a toy knife. Use tongs to try to pick it up. Pull individual strands out and lay on a piece of paper to make interesting shapes - leave these overnight to dry and he'll enjoy snapping them too.

You will need:

- 500g spaghetti*
- Sealable freezer bags*
- Different coloured food colouring*

Directions:

- Cook the spaghetti according to the instructions on the packet. Drain into a colander and rinse under cold running water until cool.*
- Divide the spaghetti into as many freezer bags as you want colours.*
- Add a few drops of a different coloured food colouring into each bag - a little goes a long way. Seal each bag and move the spaghetti around inside: your toddler will enjoy helping you do this.*
- Leave for 10 minutes to absorb the colour, then tip all the spaghetti into a large tub.*

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Messy Play

Sloppy jelly



A tub of jelly, made up with twice the amount of water, makes for a wonderfully colourful, scented, textured goo. Give him a couple of plastic pots to scoop and tip, and he'll be very happy to explore. Or set some of his easily washable plastic toys in the jelly for him to excavate.

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Messy Play

Magic rice recipe

Uncooked rice moves like water - it can be poured from a teapot and stirred in a cup, so it's a great addition to a tea party. It makes fantastic rubble on a pretend building site for mini diggers to shift. And spoons and an ice-cube tray make for happy scooping. But what your youngster will love the most is when you tip the different coloured rice into piles in a big tub and put him in charge of mixing them together to make it 'magic'.

You will need:

- 2kg white rice*
- 7 sealable freezer bags*
- Blue, red and yellow food colouring*

Directions:

- Divide the rice between seven freezer bags.*
- Add a few drops of one, two or three colours into each bag.*
- Seal and shake to distribute the colour.*
- Spread the coloured rice out on paper plates or baking trays lined with baking parchment and leave to dry for at least two hours, or overnight.*

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Messy Play

Moondust recipe

If it's a rainy day and you need an activity to keep a toddler busy for ages, make this. Mixing for just five minutes makes a powder that's great for driving cars through, scooping up with mini diggers and making all sorts of tyre tracks. Also, compact it together and it will hold a shape well, so it's fun with a muffin tray and pots for a spot of pretend baking. Have the Hoover on standby, though!

You will need:

- 1kg flour
- 200ml vegetable oil

Directions:

- Tip the flour into a bowl and pour in the oil.
- Mix with your hands, rubbing the mixture between your fingertips, as if you're making a crumble topping. It's ready when, after 3 to 5 minutes, the mixture sticks together when squeezed.

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Messy Play

My first Play Dough recipe

This is made from edible ingredients, so although it's best to discourage him from putting it into his mouth, a teeny nibble won't hurt. It's so soft, it's easy for him to mould and poke his chubby fingers into. Suitable from 12 months, discard after play.

You will need:

- 100g baby rice*
- 125g cornflour*
- 100g pot of fruit purée*
- 3 tbsp vegetable oil*
- 75ml water*

Directions:

- Mix the baby rice and cornflour together.*
- Add the fruit purée and vegetable oil and mix.*
- Add up to 75ml water, one tablespoon at a time, mixing as you go. When the mixture just starts to come together, knead to pick up the dry ingredients. Add a little more water if needed.*
- Tip on to a chopping board and knead for three to five minutes until smooth.*

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Messy play

Everyday dough recipe

Better for older children who know not to nibble, this takes 10 minutes to mix, doesn't crumble, works well in dough machines and stores well in an airtight container.

You will need:

- 175g flour*
- 175g salt*
- 1 tbsp cream of tartar*
- 225ml water*
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil*
- Food colouring (optional)*

Directions:

- Tip the flour, salt and cream of tartar into a saucepan and mix.*
- Pour the water and oil in and mix well.*
- Over a low heat, stir constantly, scraping the dough from the base.*
- After 2-3 minutes, when it forms a dough, remove from the heat and leave to cool for five minutes.*
- Knead for three minutes.*
- Separate into sections and knead a few drops of food colouring into each.*

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messy Play

Home-made slime

This is the slimiest slime that ever there was. It drips and drags from fingertips, oozes and squeezes from fists. If your little one is in need of a swamp for his collection of dinosaurs, look no further.

You will need:

- 75g cornflour*
- 120ml baby shampoo*
- Green food colouring*

Directions:

- Put the cornflour and baby shampoo into a bowl and mix together until smooth.*
- Add the food colouring and mix again.*

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Messy Play Cloud fluff

This super-soft dough smells amazing and feels even better. It's mouldable and stretches into oozing lengths of loveliness. You'll love this one too: although it's dry to the touch it will leave your hands feeling moisturised and your cuticles in tip-top condition!

You will need:

- 175ml baby hair conditioner*
- 250g cornflour*

Directions:

- Put the two ingredients into a bowl and mix - the dough will take a minute to come together.*
- Knead for a further minute until smooth.*

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Messy play

Oobleck

Have you ever read the Dr Seuss classic, Bartholomew and the Oobleck? Well, it's a tale of a king who gets annoyed at the rain in spring, the sun in summer, fog in autumn and snow in winter. When the royal magicians make sticky green slime called Oobleck fall from the sky instead, he learns not to moan - after a boy called Bartholomew saves the kingdom from the goo, of course. And this recipe for Oobleck makes some very odd goo indeed. Move your hands through it slowly or pour it, and it's a slimy liquid. But squish or squash it together, or hit it, and it's solid. Make it and your toddler will love it - and read the story too!

You will need:

- 300g cornflour
- 225ml water
- A few drops of green food colouring

Directions:

- Put the cornflour in a bowl and pour over the water and food colouring.
- Mix until there are no lumps - you'll have to mix slowly so it stays liquid!

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messy Play

Clever sand

Pinch a few handfuls of clean sand from the sandpit to make this. All the other ingredients make it extremely easy to mould, so your youngster will enjoy pressing it into pots to make mini sandcastles. It's fun to add food colouring to the water before mixing, if you like - try making two colours, so they gradually mix to make a new colour as he plays. This can be stored in an airtight container for another day - spray on a little water if it dries out between plays.

You will need:

- 1 litre play sand*
- 110g cornflour*
- 1 tbsp baby shampoo*
- 200ml water*

Directions:

- Put the sand into a large bowl and mix in the cornflour.*
- In a separate container, mix the baby shampoo and water.*
- Pour the liquid into the sand mixture and mix well. Add a little more water if you need to, until the mixture starts to clump together.*

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Messy play

Patio paint



If you have a patio or driveway made of non-porous stone or concrete, this chalk-based paint is a must. Make a pot of white patio paint, or use different coloured chalks to create a set. Give your youngster paintbrushes of different sizes, plastic easy-to-rinse toys that he can use to make prints, or encourage him to tip out a puddle of paint and drive toy cars through, or walk through it himself. The best thing? All his artwork will disappear when it rains!

You will need:

- A few sticks of the same-colour chalk
- Sealable freezer bags
- Water

Directions:

- Put the sticks of chalk into a freezer bag, remove most of the air and seal.
- Lay an old towel over a chopping board, place the bag of chalk flat on it, then fold the towel over the top.
- With the rolling pin, gently bash the chalk until it is a powder. Your youngster might like to have a go with a toy hammer too.
- Snip a corner off the freezer bag, so you can easily pour the powder into a tub without making a mess.
- Stir in a little water until it is a similar consistency to paint.

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messy play

Bright bath paint

The beauty of bath paint is that, when it's time to clear up, it simply rinses down the plughole, so give your little one a fat paintbrush and let him create. This is made in a muffin tin with a different colour in each compartment - pop a swim float, if you have one, underneath the tin in the bath. Keep the paint inside the bath, though, as the food colouring may stain grout.

You will need:

- 150ml baby bubble bath*
- 150g baby powder*
- Food colouring*

Directions:

- Mix the bubble bath with the baby powder until it forms a thick, smooth paste.*
- Pour or spoon into compartments of a muffin tin.*
- Add a few drops of food colouring to each compartment, using a combination of food colouring to create additional colours, and mix.*

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