

The sensory table provides valuable opportunities for students to explore, experiment, and discover. Use the following ideas and suggestions to keep your children excited and interested in learning about the world around them. Remember to vary sensory table materials and props on a regular basis.

- Make the sensory table a garden. Fill with topsoil and add flowers or seeds. Add gardening tools such as trowels, cups, and pails. Plastic/silk flowers can also be used for a “ready-made” garden.
- Add tearless baby shampoo to water to make bubbles with wire whisks or a hand-cranked mixer.
- Make ice cubes and freeze fun things inside such as small dinosaurs, small manipulatives, plastic bugs/insects. Ice balls can be made from freezing water balloons overnight (tear off and discard balloons before adding ice balls to table). You can also add blocks of ice (dyed blue) to make an iceberg and add sea animals like seals, walruses, and polar bears for an arctic experience.
- Fill the sensory table with water and add a turkey baster, empty squirt bottles, and funnels. Discuss terms like: empty, full, more and less as children experiment with these tools.
- Make “ooey gooey stuff” for the water table. Mix equal parts of liquid starch and white glue until it becomes “blubbery,” or use cornstarch and water to make “goop.”
- Make a pond. Add sand, water, pond animals, lily pads, magnetic fish, fishing poles, and nets.
- Have children pan for “gold.” Place a layer of sand at the bottom of the sensory table and enough water to cover the sand by three inches. Add pie pans and pyrite/small pebbles to the sand.
- Add fake gems, plastic coins, pie pans, and colanders to the sand to dig for treasure.
- Add aluminum foil to cover the bottom then add sand, water, plastic fish, seashells, and ocean life animals.
- Add birdseed with different sizes of sifters and sieves.
- Color water with brown food coloring and add animals from the swamp like frogs, alligators, and turtles. Add tree branches and rocks for “swampy” experience.
- When studying measurement, place plastic bottles of varying sizes in the sensory table. Draw several lines on each bottle with different colors of permanent marker. Have the children fill the bottles to the line and then compare which has more, less, or equal amounts.

Suggested Props for Sensory Play

Muffin tins	Funnels	Plastic worms
Cookie cutters	Pots and pans	Dinosaur props
Seashells	Buckets	Paintbrushes
Sifters	Bowls	Waterwheels
Tweezers	Measuring cups	Boats
Shovels	Measuring spoons	Squeeze bottles
Molds for sand play	Scoops and strainers	Tongs
Spray bottles	Ladles and sieves	Whisks
Rolling pins	Corks	Eye droppers
Rakes	Nesting cups	Sponges
Plastic animals	Small containers	Small fish nets
Marbles	PVC pipes w/ connectors	Hand-cranked mixers



A sensory table should be accessible and supplied with ample sensory materials and tools to dig, scoop, pour, and measure on a daily basis.