

Gardening Sensory Bin



Materials Needed: Dirt, sand, dried beans, or rice. A bin with a lid or a sandbox outside (this is an excellent activity for outside play). Plastic flowers, shovels, toy bugs, small cups or buckets, watering can (if you want to add water to the play). [Spring Garden Sensory Bin » Spring Crafts & Activities \(jessicaetcetera.com\)](#)

SAFETY – kids are naturally going to figure out what something is by putting it into their mouths. Remind them it is “for our hands, not mouths.” Re-direct with another action they can do with the materials.

Keep the space you have to play in mind – smaller space will have fewer items so that there is room for play and exploration. Remember what you, as the caregiver, can handle is essential. **Have towels or baby wipes available** if touching new things or textures is not a favorite thing.

How to: Fill your bin with the material you want your child to explore. Model how to begin if they are hesitant. Scooping and dumping with cups, shovels are always fun – and rice, beans can make a gentle sound as they fall on the items in the bin. Model language by labeling what you are doing “scoop,” “in,” “out.” You can bury items under the sand and dig for them, and you can add a plastic flower to a cup and put beans around it to help it stand up in the cup.

Developmentally this activity encourages: This activity encourages fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination, heavy work – scooping, dumping, digging in the sand, many opportunities for language development – labeling, using functional words like in and out, an opportunity to explore through play and practice real-life skills – *using a spoon is scooping and getting the food to a target*, digging, scooping is a great way to practice the skill, pouring out items from cups, pouring into cups. Socially and emotionally, this activity gives your child a chance to explore and discover with you close by to support, encourage, and model. Being silly, laughing, and sharing the BIG FUN supports learning by tying the activity to an emotion, which helps to cement long-term and muscle memory skills.

Upcycle an old bookshelf into a sandbox – [Color-Block Sandbox \(Wayfair DIY Challenge\) | The Homes I Have Made](#)



When my daughter was a toddler, we began collecting dress-up clothes. Shoving them into a tote with a lid was an awful idea since she would have to pull everything out to ‘find’ what she wanted.

Our poor dog was always covered in feathers, princess dresses, and beads. He never seemed to mind.

I took a shelf like this and created a dress-up ‘closet’ to help organize the items and keep me from going crazy with everything all over the floor.

While researching some ideas, I found this DIY idea. Brilliant!

I have provided a link if you are curious how this family created this product they used. My kids spent hours in the sandbox – trucks, mud pies, and treasure hunts. The play was never-ending. While living in Texas and North Carolina, ants were an issue. We added some ground cinnamon to the sand, which helped keep the ants out (and spiders). Cinnamon has a rough texture spiders do not like to walk on and ants do not like the smell. Once a month, I would add a small bottle of cinnamon from the dollar store and stir it into the sandbox. The link provided below gives good ideas on how to keep your sandbox clean and safe.

[How to Keep Bugs Out of the Sandbox \(vulcantermite.com\)](#)