

## Glow in the Dark Sensory Bins and Bags

Exploring the world around us is fantastic – and even more so when we are toddlers. Everything is new, cool and we have to figure out how it all works. Not all sensory activities have to be messy. We can support sensory exploration with some fun activities that include touching, watching, cause and effect.

**Materials Needed:** Glow in the dark Sensory Bags

- **Clear, empty gallon size Ziploc bags** – freezer bags are thicker plastic and 'tougher.'
- **Duct tape** – you want to make sure the bags are sealed and secured so they cannot be opened.
- **Dollar Tree goodies!** – hair gel (the big bottle), misc items that will glow under a black light. Glitter, confetti, cotton balls, googly eyes, glow sticks, food coloring, paints, etc. Let your imagination go wild!
- **Scissors** – for cutting tape, making items smaller if need be, etc.
- **Black Lights** – light bulbs, flashlights, USB bars (found at Walmart recently)
- **Don't overcrowd the bag** – this is an opportunity for exploration, using language, fine motor and sometimes less is more.



**How to:** Once you have all of your materials together, you can begin to create. Add the hair gel first, and then add the items to the bag so you can move them around and scatter the materials. When the bag has everything added, close it and then use duct tape to cover the opening to prevent little hands from trying to open it. One of my favorite things to do is put the bags on a window/sliding glass door to be interactive all day; the light hits it differently throughout the day. We have added two colors of food coloring to the hair gel, taped to windows, and then let the children squish, mix, create a new color! Yellow and Red – Orange for pumpkins, fall leaves! Red and Blue – Purple for Halloween and sunsets, Blue and Yellow – green for the trees and the grass.

**Developmentally this activity encourages** language development by giving you opportunities to use descriptive language, action words, and silly sounds. Eye/hand coordination and fine motor development are encouraged (pushing items around the bag, as well as giving your child an opportunity to continue to remember the activity if you hang up bag(s) where your child can interact with them throughout their day for a few days). Having your child see their work also support self-confidence as it is displayed for all to see and enjoy. This activity also supports your child's initiating and engagement skills as they can invite you to interact with them, imitating each other with actions and sounds while expanding their ability to stay engaged in an activity for an extended time.

**Remember** – *when we model, and they imitate, that is the beginning of understanding communication. When we imitate our children, we tell them their ideas and choices are powerful, which can encourage them to want to do more.*

### Glow in the dark edible sensory bins

#### Materials Needed:

- **Tote (w/lid), sensory table, bowl, cake pan.** – You can use any type of container. If it has a tight-fitting lid, it makes for easy clean-up. Choose what is best for your family.  
**DUMP OUT WHEN DONE DUE TO MOISTURE AND POTENTIAL BACTERIA GROWTH.**
- **Tonic Water with Quinine** – You can use any brand of tonic water as long as it has Quinine in it. **Quinine will make the food item glow when you cook or prepare it as a substitute for water.**
- **Pasta, rice, Jell-O** – prepare the food items as you typically would but substitute the tonic water for water
- **Dollar Tree items** – glow-in-the-dark accessories (stars, glow sticks), non-glow items to explore with the blacklight (bugs, trucks/cars, scoops, cups, etc.)
- **Don't overcrowd the bin** – this is an opportunity for exploration, using language, heavy work, and sometimes less is more.



**How to:** Make whatever medium you would like to use, substituting tonic water with Quinine for the water. The idea is that this is a touchable activity, but you could still put it in a Ziploc bag if you wanted to. Jell-o will be whatever color it typically is until you put the black light on it. Then it will glow. Cooked pasta and rice will also not look any different until you put the black light on them.

Ensure you throw away the pasta/rice/Jell-O when you finish exploring, as there is no way to clean it for storage.

**This activity can be a calming tool** – sitting together and exploring slowly to watch all of the items glow, to test items to see if they glow. We have used different types of mediums in the classroom – slime, play dough, rice (uncooked), and with the lights down/off and a black light to explore, it creates a calming environment.

**Developmentally this activity encourages** language development by giving you opportunities to use descriptive language, action words, and silly sounds. Eye/hand coordination and heavy work moving items to explore, to discover if they glow. This activity can support your child's initiating and engagement skills as they can invite you to interact with them, mimicking each other with actions and sounds while expanding their ability to stay engaged in an activity for an extended period.

**Remember** – *when we model and your child imitates, this is the beginning of understanding communication. When we imitate our children, we tell them their ideas and choices are powerful, encouraging them to want to do more.*

YouTube Link below has how the pasta and Jell-O were made: [Making Edible Glow-in-the-Dark Food! - YouTube](#)