

The benefits of messy play



Photo by Lisa Barnett

Messy play! You either love it or hate it! Well if you hate it, hopefully I can change your mind... especially if you keep a very clean and organised house or setting.

Research shows that messy play is one of the best ways to learn. By being given the freedom to play with things that make a 'mess'. Children are given no expectations on what they should produce, in other words they can focus on process over product. If they have no expectations of what it to be produced so they cannot go wrong. There are no restricting end goals, the possibilities are endless. If they cannot go wrong, they will develop the courage and confidence to be curious, make their own discoveries, problem solves, have a go and keep trying. Characteristics of effective learning that we want all children to have. If children develop the characteristics of effective learning during their early years, they will be able to learn later with a growth not a fixed mindset.



Photo by Lynsey Montgomery

Messy play or sensory play as it is also known helps children and babies learn how to use their senses to learn, being tuned into their senses helps children to understand the world around them.

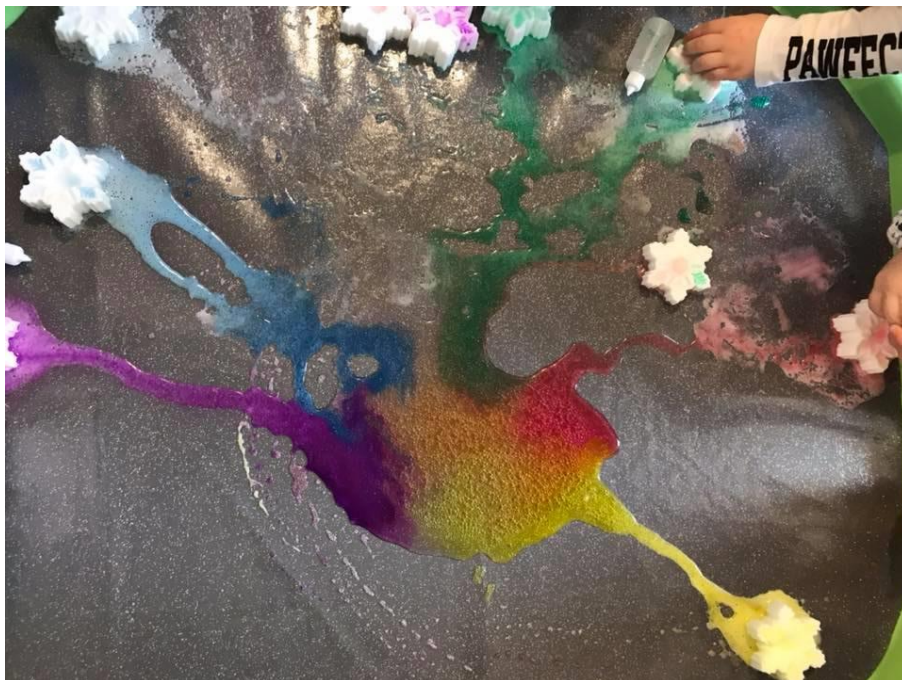


Photo by Sue Baxter

During messy play children can contemplate and wonder 'what happens if I do this', in other words it enables them to learn to think for themselves. The possibilities are endless therefore children develop their divergent thinking skills.



Photo by Becky Allen

Through this experience children can develop their communication and language skills and build relationships with those around them by testing ideas and discussing them.

Children are practising their fine motor skills during messy play, often using tweezers, sponges, brushes and scissors. Fine motor skills are needed to develop their hand and finger muscles ready for writing.





Photos by Lynsey Montgomery



Photo by Jessica Perry

Messy play can also help children to self-regulate their emotions, it is often calming as well as interesting and allows children to be free from distraction.

If this is not all reason enough just look at their little faces as they experience messy play!



Photo by Hilly NB

