

Sensory Bottles



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Explore the properties of liquids in this no mess, upcycled toy.

Duration

Preparation: 20 minutes

Activity: 1-10 minute repeatable playtimes

Supplies

- Bottle with a tight closing lid
- Water
- Food coloring, dye, or paint
- Glue to seal lids (hot glue or super glue work well)
- Vegetable oil (optional)
- Small objects (beads, glitter, small figurines) (optional)
- Dish soap, if using glitter

Background

Babies, toddlers, and young children are natural scientists, always exploring the world around them. They are natural mess makers in the process too, so this activity provides an exploration that is contained in a sealed bottle. Children can explore concepts like floating and sinking, bubbles, and mixing as they play. Attention spans are not very long at this age, so your child may not engage with the bottles for a long time but will likely be willing to return to them again and again.

Instructions

1. Fill your clean, empty bottle about 2/3 full of water.
2. Add a drop or two of food coloring, dye, or water-based paint.
3. Add any objects. We used glitter and beads in an all water bottle and a plain water and oil bottle. A tiny drop of dish soap helped glitter disperse through the water instead of clumping together.
4. Fill the bottle the rest of the way with oil, if using. If not, fill with water.
5. Use glue along the inside of the lid to seal it. Test to make sure the glue is dry, and the lid cannot come off before giving to your child.
6. Play! Help the child turn the bottle, shake it, and roll it.

Extension

As you play, talk about how the liquids inside move and point out anything you notice as you interact. Invite your child to do the same. Name the colors and objects inside.

Enlist an older child's help to make the bottles. Try experimenting with other liquids or objects you find around your house.

