

Winter-Themed Sensory Bin Ideas

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What Is A Sensory Bin?

A sensory bin is a tactile experience in a contained area (such as storage container). Fillers are used to create the sensory experience and can include dry or wet textures. The container should be large enough to allow your child to explore without the filler moving out of the container. Sensory bins can be filled with various play items that enhance play and exploration of the texture. A sensory bin can be easily switched for a unique or new experience every time!

You can create bins that have various themes. Themes can be based on of your child's favorite interests, season/holiday, or early learning concepts (e.g. colors, letters, numbers, etc.). Also don't forget bins can have themes that include other important sensory stimuli, like smell and taste! In this handout, you will find ideas for Fall-themed sensory bins that include lots of smells and different textures!

Please make sure to supervise your child at all times during sensory bin play to ensure overall safety.

Some sensory bin ideas are food-related and can be eaten during play, while others cannot. When making a food-based bin, it is a good idea not to include any small items in the bin that may end up in your child's mouth. Instead use other food items in your play! And also make sure the foods you offer are appropriate for your child oral-motor coordination abilities.

How Do I Make A Sensory Bin?

It's easy! Here are some things you will need:

1. **Container** –storage container, dish tub, foil roasting pan, small baking dish, foil pie pan, shallow cardboard box, or shallow Tupperware container
2. **Filler** –see below for some Winter-Themed Sensory Bin Texture Ideas
3. **Various Toy Items**
4. **Tools for Exploration (or using just your hands is perfectly fine!)**
5. **Towels, wipes, and a small bowl filled with water**

And lastly, remember that it is perfectly okay to get messy and make a mess when playing with sensory bins. Ask any occupational therapist, if we're not making a mess then we're not having fun!



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Dry Winter Themed Bin

Fill your container with some white beans, rice, and/or dry pasta (food-colored works too). Now add some cotton balls, blue colored glass beads, fuzzy pom poms, pinecones, and/or snowflakes.



Dry Sticky “Hot Chocolate”

Sprinkle 8 cups of flour onto a cookie sheet and bake for 5 minutes in an oven at 350°F. This will make the flour taste-safe for your little one(s). Make sure to allow everything to cool before proceeding to the next step! Place your cooled flour and about 2-4 cups of hot cocoa mix in a large container. You can add a little or lot of hot cocoa mix depending on how much of the color and scent you like. Add about 1 ½ cups of vegetable oil and mix everything together. The dough should be dry if you touch it but stick together if you grab a handful. Add more oil a little at a time until you reach the desired texture. Now you’re ready for some fun!

Fun Floating Icebergs

Fill your container with room temperature water and a handful of small/large ice cubes (if you want bigger ice cubes, freeze water in Tupperware containers). Now add some polar bears, penguins, whales or other small toys to your container!

Let’s Play with Snow!

Fill your container with homemade snow! Mix 1 cup of baking soda with 1 cup of shaving cream using a fork. Add a few drops of water until it creates a snow-like consistency. Now add some beads, buttons, pinecones, snowflakes and/or some woodland animals to your container. See if your little one(s) can build a snowman or let him/her have fun exploring your homemade snow.



Winter Slime

Grab some blue slime or coloring of your choosing and place it into a Tupperware container. Add some fun glitter, beads, snowflakes, and/or buttons to your slime. Now let your little one(s) have fun exploring!

