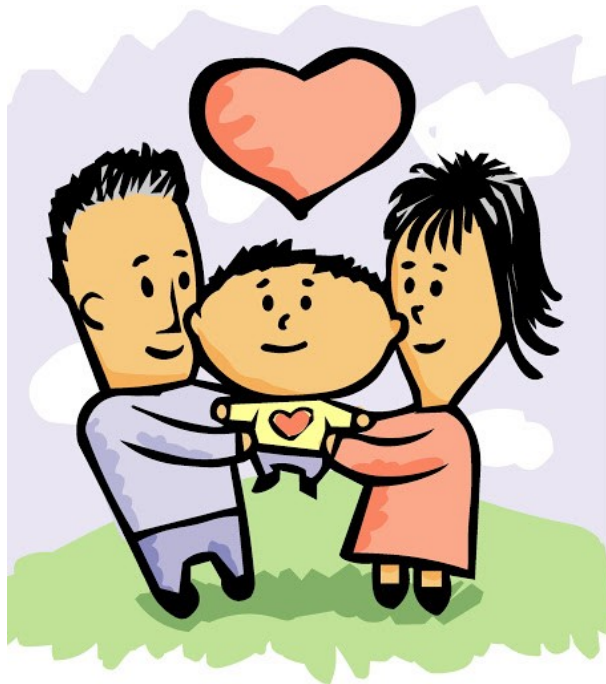


# VALENTINE ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR TINY TREASURE



## **Edible Valentines Playdough**

Edible playdough is easy to make. It is not intended to be ate and eating playdough should be discouraged however you don't have to worry if your child does put it in their mouth. This sensory activity uses all your child's sense of touch, smell, taste and sight.

### **Porridge Oats Play Dough Recipe**

#### **Ingredients:**

½ cup uncooked oats  
¼ cup water  
¼ cup flour  
Small drop of red food colouring (not essential)



#### **Directions:**

Stir all of the ingredients together in a large bowl until everything is completely mixed together.

Use heart shape cookie cutters, rolling pins, small cups, baking trays, wooden spoons etc. and let your child explore.

#### **Benefits of playdough activities:**

- Pushing, smashing, and pulling apart play dough helps to build shoulder, **arm and hand strength**.
- Playdough is also good for developing **fine motor movements of the hands and fingers:**

‘**Pincer grasp**’ – pinching the dough between the thumb and the index (first) finger.

‘**Finger isolation**’ – Using a single finger to point or push the dough.

‘**Thumb opposition**’ – co-ordinating the thumb with the other fingers to help with holding and squeezing.

- Developing **Hand-Eye Coordination** skills – learning to move the hand/objects correctly to where the eyes are looking/where you want the object to go.
- Learning **Bilateral Coordination** Skills – learning to coordinate/use two hands at the same time to accomplish a task. (Using either both hands to do the same/similar action, or using one hand to hold an object, while the other hand is busy working.)

## **Jumping Hearts – Gross Motor Activity**



A fun and simple activity, all you need is some pink or red paper or card.

Cut out some heart shapes big enough to fit both your child's feet on.

*(For more challenging activities you can cut out different colours or sizes)*

Then you can play lots of different games, depending on your child's abilities:

- Let your child place the hearts around the room - or you can scatter the hearts and encourage your child to run about and collect them in a basket.
- Make a straight line of hearts and encourage your child to walk along the line – make a wavy line and encourage your child to practise staying on the line.
- Encourage your child to jump (Using two feet) onto the hearts.
- Practise jumping over the hearts...or running around them instead of on them.
- Count as your child jumps from heart to heart: 1...2...3
- Make two different coloured hearts and encourage your child to pick out and stand on just one colour at a time.

To extend the activity further, you could:

- Make different sized hearts and ask your child to jump on the big/little hearts.
- Practice Jumping/hopping on one foot over the hearts.
- Try balancing a heart on your head. Can you walk with it on your head too?
- Make a little heart obstacle course.
- Make it a race; see how fast they can jump without falling off the hearts.
- Introduce music; jump on the hearts when the music starts or stops.
- Have a basket for the children to throw the hearts into.

There are lots of physical skills to learn in this simple game. They might include: gross motor skills of the legs and body; cognitive thinking skills, motor movement control, coordinating how the body moves, developing body awareness and balance skills.

## Threading Hearts

This is a simple craft activity is good for developing hand and eye co-ordinations (making little one's hands go to the correct spot they are looking at) and practising fine motor movements of the fingers.

All you need is:

- Some pink or red card
- A hole punch stamper
- Some string or laces
- Sellotape

1. Cut some hearts out of the paper or card
2. Stamp holes around the edges
3. Place sellotape around the end of the string to make it easier for little fingers to guide, or use laces, or thread through the holes.
4. Offer your little one assistance by offering to hold the heart shape template while they practise .



*(Please remember in the interest of health and safety to keep the thread short and never leave your little one unattended with the thread, wool or string)*

## **Valentine's Heart Printing**

This is a fun messy play activity. The 'cause and effect' of stamping and making something appears helps little ones recognise they can make things happen for themselves. This helps to build their creativity, confidence and offers a sense of achievement.



- To make the cardboard heart all you need is an empty kitchen roll, toilet roll holder, wrapping paper tube.
- Elastic bands.
- Paint (we suggest red, pink, purple for Valentine's)
- a canvas, paper, card
- Create a crease in the top side; this will give you two bumps that form the top of the heart.
- Then squeeze the bottom of the roll to form the pointy bottom of the heart.
- Wrap a rubber band around the end of the tube to hold it in place.
- Then dip the end into the paint and print onto the paper.

An alternative could be to use potato stamps or sponges cut into heart shapes.





## Valentines Dancing Ribbons

This is an easy fun craft activity.

-You can use them just for the enjoyment of dancing along.

-You can use them how to encourage your child's imitation skills: encouraging your child to copy waving them high in the air; making magic circles; making a wavy tail; making a snake on the ground, swapping it between hands; under your leg etc.

-Extending an understanding of key words: 'Up', 'down', 'under', 'behind'

-Talking and learning about colours.



What you need:

Ribbon: this doesn't need to be expensive it can be ribbon you have in the house, tissue paper cut into strips, streamers, or old bits of material.

A handle or a ring: there are lots of different inexpensive things you can use: Bracelets, plastic lids (cut out a circle in the centre), small paper plates, cardboard ring from inside sticky tape, Ice Lolly Sticks.

1. Cut your ribbon, streamers etc. into strips.
2. Tie or tape them to the rings.
3. Add decorations: valentine's stickers, or paint/draw pictures onto the paper rings.

**(Again, for Health and Safety, please ensure little ones are never left unattended with dancing ribbons.)**



### Valentines Sensory Tubs

This is an activity for you to do with your child; little ones should be supervised at all times but should have the freedom to explore the items how they choose, as long as it is safe to do so.

Sensory tubs allow children to play creatively and imaginatively in an unstructured way. You can support your child by describing what they have found and what they are doing with the things they have found...at bit like a commentator at a football match!

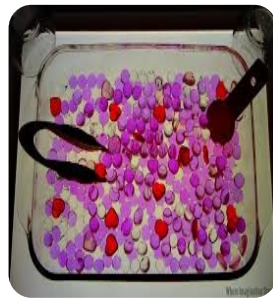
Sensory tubs can also build fine motor control of the fingers, coordination and focus and concentration skills.

#### How to make a sensory tub:

Find a box, tub or tray. An under bed storage box is really good as it helps to restrict the amount of mess and is easy for your child to access. Don't go to any expense, a cardboard box can be just as good. Make use of what you have to hand. Whatever you choose, make sure that your child will be able to reach into it easily. If it's quite big then it will be easier to contain the mess!

You can fill it with anything you like. The idea is that your child will have to search through the box to find the items hidden inside. For the sensory filling you could use:

Shredded tissue paper, dry rice/pasta, buttons, feathers, pom-pom's or really anything else you have lying around the house that you can hide the objects in and your child can rummage through.



Then you need to fill it with different items. There are many things you can choose but for this one we suggest Valentines or red items such as; hearts, heart shaped cookie cutters, heart shapes stress balls, small soaps, small teddies, chocolates, rose petals, love heart sweeties, feather boas

Then let your child explore the box and have fun. Talk to them about the different items they find. Ideally have items in the box that will use different senses: things to smell, touch, taste, hear etc.

Have fun with your tiny loved ones this Valentines



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