

Family Mental Fitness North East Programme Overview

Sensory Messy Play



EYFS	KS1	KS2		KS3	FAMILIES
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Sensory Messy Play is a joyful, exploration-based group session for 2–5-year-olds and their parent or carer. Children are invited to explore a wide range of sensory experiences using safe, tactile materials like coloured rice, oats, pasta, jelly, soft fruits, water, paint, feathers, and foam – as well as light, sound, and music. Sessions follow a themed structure—such as “Rainbow Picnic,” “Under the Sea,” or “Sound Explorers”—and blend messy play, creative expression, and calming routines to help young children develop early regulation, communication, and sensory confidence.

Purpose

To provide young children with rich, multi-sensory experiences that support emotional development, communication, food curiosity, and body awareness. The sessions create a safe, playful environment where children can engage at their own pace, supported by a trusted adult.

Impact

- Encourages early language and shared attention
- Builds sensory tolerance and confidence through play
- Supports emotional regulation and communication
- Strengthens caregiver-child co-regulation and bonding

Outcomes

- Increased curiosity and comfort with new textures, sounds, and visuals
- Improved fine and gross motor skills through active exploration
- Greater confidence in group play and shared experiences
- Positive early associations with creativity, music, and food

Example Session Structure

- Welcome and themed settling activity (e.g. musical shakers, sensory mats)
- Messy play zone: tactile trays (e.g. jelly, sand, paint), light exploration, or sound play
- Themed story, rhyme or movement break
- Calm-down space with blankets, bubble tube, and soft music

Group Size

- Small group: Up to 6 children (with one parent/carer each)

Cost Per Session

Schools and Public Bodies: £22

Subsidised for families: £11

For Funders

Fully funded cost per 12-week programme: £1728

(£24 per user per session)

Fully Funded includes delivery by qualified practitioner, programme administration and evaluation reporting, in-session resources, venue hire, and take-home items.

Version: 1.0

Approved by: Director

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