

5 Things to Do With Your Kids During Winter Break for Sensory and Fine Motor Skills

These are great activities that can also be done with siblings. Please be sure to supervise for safety as needed.

1. Encourage as much independence and participation as possible/reasonable with self-help tasks (such as self-feeding, dressing, toileting) on a consistent basis.

- Utilize a **backward chaining approach** if needed in order to encourage participation with tasks such as buttoning, zipping, and putting on socks, shoes, jackets, etc. This means that, at first, the adult will perform the entire task except for the very last step. Your child can then perform the last step in order to complete it. Once they have mastered that, do the same thing but have them perform the last two steps themselves, and so on.

2. Play with materials that allow for scooping and pouring.

- Helps kids practice fine motor skills such as grasping, hand strength, rotating the wrist and forearm, bilateral coordination, and [crossing the midline](#). Some ideas for materials that are good for indoor scooping include sand, water (perfect for bath time!), dry beans, dry noodles, dry rice, and popcorn kernels. Please only offer items you know your child can be safe with.

3. Explore different types of sensory play!

- **Play dough.** Incorporate cookie cutters, safe scissors, toothpicks, fork, or a child-safe knife. Try [my go-to stovetop recipe](#), this [no-cook recipe from Kids Activity Blog](#), or [this colored and scented recipe](#) using a packet of Kool Aid!
- **Slime.** Equal parts school glue and liquid starch make for a stretchy (but not sticky) sensory play creation! [See my recipe with tips and photos here](#).
- **Rainbow spaghetti.** Colorful spaghetti that's a tad slimy and loads of fun to play with, especially for those who still put play items in their mouths. [Recipe here](#).
- **Cloud dough.** Uses two ingredients from your cupboard (okay, three if you want to add color) and allows for exploring, scooping, and building. [Mouth-safe recipe here](#).
- **Kinetic Sand.** Dry "sand" that is moldable and "moves". Can be found at lots of stores such as Michaels, Target, Toys R Us and, yes, even Amazon. Learn all about the benefits of using Kinetic Sand for working on developmental skills in [my post here](#). Not recommended for kids who will put play items in their mouths.
- **Finger painting.** Sold at the dollar store, craft stores, and the craft aisle of stores like Target, Wal-Mart, etc. Try out this [mouth-safe finger paint recipe](#) from Momtastic.
- **Sensory bins.** Let hands explore in a bin filled with any variety of sensory materials such as dry beans, dry or cooked noodles, dry rice, popcorn kernels, [jingle bells](#), and more. Learn more about sensory bins and sensory play from [this post on Twodaloo](#).

4. Do some basic arts and crafts.

- Coloring, tearing or cutting paper, crumpling pieces of tissue paper, using glue or a glue stick, coloring and drawing on an easel, using a paintbrush or Q-tips, and using stamps or stickers are all fun ways to practice fine motor skills. The website <http://dltk-kids.com> has TONS of kid-friendly craft and art ideas, plus free pages you can print for coloring, painting, and more.

5. Let them help with food preparation.

- Help with smashing foods like cooked potatoes or bananas, peeling foods like bananas or tangerines, and mixing, stirring, kneading, or serving food.

Read original post from MamaOT.com here: <http://wp.me/p2GnLU-1EJ>