

Sensory Explorations: Touch

Activity #1: Tactile Book

For Parents and Children 2-4 years



Would you like to create a book that you can read with your hands while your eyes are closed? Where you can discover, without looking, furry surfaces, round shapes, something bumpy?

A book is usually understood as a container of words and images. But a book is also a physical object that communicates through its color, material, size, smell, texture, and weight. In our early encounters with books, before they are read, they are interesting objects that can be explored in different ways.

We will make a simple book of textures that lets us use our sense of touch to explore it as an object and to “read” it to tell stories. The sense of touch is the first sense babies develop in the womb; it’s how they bond with people and the world around them. Many of us rely primarily on the sense of sight.

This tactile book is an invitation to close our eyes and allow our sense of touch to guide us in the exploration of various textures that may remind us of stories, sounds, and images. By encouraging children to use their senses to explore, create, and play, we help them develop brain connections, practice vocabulary, and use their fine and gross motor skills.

- Select materials:** You will need: A flat base, such as 2 pieces of cardboard; textured objects like feathers, felt, fabric, pipe cleaners, buttons, bottle tops, tiny bells, tree bark, sponge, plastic; adhesives like tape, glue, or a stapler.
Begin by joining your child for a texture hunt around the house. Be curious. Ask your child to touch objects and describe them. How many kinds of textures can you find at home? Choose objects that are light and disposable since they will be permanently glued to the book. Clean them and cut them in different shapes and sizes.
- Assemble book:** Lay the materials that you’ve collected on the table to make them accessible and visible. Invite your child to arrange the objects on the two cardboard pages making fun patterns, areas, shapes. Once the composition is ready, help your child glue the objects down. Elmer’s glue works best for objects that are flat and fixed on the cardboard; the stapler may be better for objects that hang or move, such as the pipe cleaners. When you finish gluing textures, join the two pages using tape, leaving enough space between the pages so the book can close.
- “Read” together:** First, show your child how to read the book while keeping your eyes closed. Slowly touch the pages and begin to tell a story based on the tactile sensations of the book: *“I’m walking on the grass (dried flowers), and wow! I found a tree branch (pipe cleaner) that sings a song for me (bells) and has round fruits (buttons)…* Invite your child to read the book with their hands, touch the objects, and invent stories.