

I Can Touch - Textures Board!

Explore the sense of touch by making a textures board with your child! Create a board that has many different materials and textures to investigate the concepts and language of touch and texture.

Topic: Feely board

Time: 20 mins

Age group: 4 - 7

What you need

- Wooden/plastic board or strong cardboard – could use a chopping board!
- Glue/sellotape
- Different texture and types of materials. To start with try to get a range that covers at least the textures of smooth, rough, hard and soft. See what you have at home or raid your local arts and crafts store! Suggestions (obviously there will be overlap with some of these categories!):

Smooth	Rough	Hard	Soft
Plastic lid	Sandpaper	Buttons	Sponge
Wood	Velcro	Dry pasta	Pom poms
Tin foil	Rough sponge	Shells	Felt
Paper	Bristled brush	Paperclips	Feathers

What to do

Set up

Decide on your materials and textures and stick them to the board or cardboard. Or if your child is a suitable age work with them to make the board or both make your own. You can make it look neater by having the materials roughly the same size and framing them with squares of cardboard or drawings of hand shapes!

Activity

1. Free exploration: Start with allowing your kids to explore touch all the different materials and textures on the board. Ask them to describe what they are feeling.
2. If they do not have the vocabulary help them by using a 'think aloud' strategy – 'The wood is smooth and hard but the sponge feels different. It is soft.'
3. Ask the children to categorise the objects: which ones feel hard, which ones feel soft, which are smooth & which are rough?
4. Ask the kids to find other things in the house that feel similar.
5. Go outside and look for natural things that are soft/hard/rough/smooth.
6. Extend the vocabulary further to include more descriptive words (sticky, bumpy, scratchy etc.)

The Science

Our sense of touch comes from receptors in our skin. The skin is actually the largest organ in the body, covering all of our body surface! Some parts of our skin are more sensitive to touch than others, for example; our fingertips, the skin on our face and our lips. This is because there are more touch receptors clustered close together in these areas. Touching something triggers these receptors which then send messages to the brain about the feel and temperature of what is being touched. Our other main senses include sight, hearing, taste



and smell. They all have their own ways of taking in information and passing it to the brain but they also interact with each other to give us information about the world around us.

Science talk

Science talk is a way of giving children the language they need to investigate and explore concepts.

Description words

Use description words like smooth, rough, hard, soft, bumpy, scratchy, squishy, furry, hairy, prickly, lumpy as well as introducing the word and concept of texture as a result of touch. Model science talk by feeling the different textures and describing how they feel.

Science process words

Use science process words like compare, see, observe, discover, explore, wonder, test, and investigate. 'Let's compare the two textures of the sponge and the piece of wood – this one is soft and squishy, this one is hard and smooth'.

Open ended questions

Can you pick two things on the feely board that feel soft? What other things in the house feel like this piece of wood? Can you think of something outside in the garden that feels rough? How does grass feel against your toes? How does the footpath feel?

Skills

Children will learn about the concepts of touch and texture as well as the skills of observing and comparing. They will also learn vocabulary around textures.

Stay Safe

- Be careful if using heavy wood for feely board.
- With small children be careful using glue to assemble feely board.
- Do not use anything with sharp edges that might cut.

Ways to document

You can create a simple chart to roughly categorise the different textures. Make a simple table or chart with the headings 'object' and 'smooth', 'rough', 'soft', 'hard', 'other'. Write down the name or put a picture of the object on the left hand side and tick whether it is smooth/rough/hard/soft, then note any other descriptive words that you use to describe the texture of that object. Keep adding to the chart as you find other objects with the same textures and compare them to your previous results.

Extending the activity

You could start to investigate other types of textures by for example preparing small basins that children can put their hands or feet into with pebbles, sand, water and slime! Here they will experience wet versus dry. You could also investigate hot versus cold using water (of course being careful not to have your basins too hot or too cold!). Or you could begin to talk about how different objects are made of different materials – some are natural and some are man-made, some are made of wood, some metal, some plastic etc.