

# Essential ingredients for healthy development

## SENSES

Play,  
movement  
and time  
outside



## Touch

We feel through our skin. We learn to recognise different textures (rough & smooth), temperature (hot & cold) and pain (sharp or dull). Some areas such as our face, hands and feet are more sensitive to touch. Generally warm temperatures and firm touch (big bear hugs) can feel good and calm our bodies and cold or light touch (tickle) wake us up which may startle or energise us.

### Activity ideas

- Water, mud and sand are great natural resources to explore touch. Dig, build, walk and play. These are available at local parks, creeks, beaches but also your backyard.
- Collect natural items when out and about. Explore the texture and feel of each item and group them into different categories.
- Build a Bug Hotel and explore the different textures of each item [www.natureplaywa.org.au/diy-bug-hotel-no-construction-required](http://www.natureplaywa.org.au/diy-bug-hotel-no-construction-required)
- Where it's safe, allow children to move about barefoot. This helps them to feel that they have a secure foothold when climbing trees or balancing over rocks.

### Make it easier

- Don't force a reluctant child but encourage exploration through play and make it fun. Talk about what it is and how it feels, allow them to explore it first with tools (sticks or for some gloves) before using hands or feet. Sometimes having water/cloth on hand to wash it off or just using one finger or a tool instead of touching it can help.
- Explore new sensations on the arms and legs where it may be less sensitive than face, hands or feet.

### add challenge

- + Explore touch without sight. Younger children may enjoy putting some objects into a bag and having to guess what they are by feeling them. Older children may explore blindfolded guided walks focusing on using feet and hands to guide them.