

## **TREASURE BASKETS**

### **The touch basket**

Touch plays is a very important part in the life of young babies. Because it is well developed even at birth, it provides babies with more immediate access to their world than any other sense, and this is why it is the first in the senses collection.

Touch is essential to a baby's development. It obviously has an effect on sensory motor development, but it also has potent influence over their physical growth, their emotional development and cognitive potential. Touch is also connected with the immune system, affecting health and physical well begin.

The touch basket promotes exploration of texture, shape, weight and of coldness, smoothness and pattern. These are all concepts relevant to babies and nursery aged children.

#### **Try some of these natural objects**

- Fir cones of various sizes and types
- Shells of a range of types and sizes
- Gourds (either fresh or dried) in different sizes and textures of skin
- Big feathers
- Pumice stone
- Loofah
- Natural sponge
- Pebbles
- Driftwood
- Corks
- A short length of rope

#### **Try adding some of these objects**

- A baby or child's shoe
- A nail brush
- A shaving brush
- A small bottle brush
- A leather purse (if currently acceptable)
- A triangle
- A fur ball
- A tea strainer
- An avocado pear stone
- A hairbrush
- A velvet powder puff
- A small teddy bear
- A short piece of chain
- A small wooden bowl
- A walnut
- A raffia coaster

#### **Disposables**

- A lemon
- An orange
- An apple
- A pomegranate
- Cardboard tubes
- Paper (tissue, greaseproof, foil, kitchen roll).

### **The 'Touch Wood' Basket**

This basket is filled with things made of wood. Wood provides children with an enjoyable sensory experience. The feel, the smell (and even the taste) of wood is a pleasure to most, and will encourage exploration by all the senses. Touching or stroking wood has a calming effect on some children, as they explore its curves and surfaces.

Try to provide a variety of different wood, with a range of grains, patterns and colours. Look in your kitchen drawer or utensil holder, or take a walk in you collect natural wooden items. Driftwood from the seaside is always a good addition.

Once your collection has begun, you will notice the natural, neutral appearance of the basket, giving a calming contrast to the bright colours of most toys.

#### **Some items to collect**

- Pine cones
- Driftwood
- Small off cuts from DIY shop or carpenter
- Flooring sample
- Pieces of bark
- Large curly shavings
- Short lengths of broomstick
- Wooden spoons and spatulas
- Large nuts
- Small sticks
- Wooden eggs
- Plain wood pencils
- Wooden nesting dolls
- Wooden blocks
- Cotton reels (wooden)

#### **Try some of these**

- Wooden curtain rings
- Clothes pegs (wooden)
- Wooden boxes
- Small bowls
- Egg cups
- Small wooden toys
- Pastry crimper
- Salt and pepper pots
- Wooden spoons
- Napkin rings
- Wooden salad servers
- Wooden beads
- Corks (various)
- Honey dipper
- Small rolling pin
- Coasters

#### **More ideas**

- Castanets
- A small boat
- Wooden fruit
- A baby rattle
- Chopsticks
- Salad servers
- Wooden bracelets

## Rolling Along

From the age of eight or nine months children are showing signs of moving about and crawling – exploring the world further. As children begin to move about, they become interested in other things that move about too.

Stimulating items that roll and need chasing engage children and encourage movement in them. A collection of things that roll will support other collections and may be made up from them.

This collection can also be successfully used with older children to explore movement, test and talk about the properties of objects, how they roll best, sorting rollers and 'non rollers'.

As with all collections, these objects must be regularly wiped or washed to keep them free of dust, dirt and germs.

### Things that don't roll

- Boxes
- Bricks & blocks
- A ruler

### Things that roll strangely

- Eggs
- Lemons

### Some objects to start your rolling collection

- Tennis ball
- Golf ball
- Quoits of raffia, rubber, wood
- Small and large cardboard rolls and tubes
- Serviette rings
- Marble or wooden eggs
- Curtin rings
- Sweet tubes
- Pompom wool ball
- Ping pong ball
- Coasters
- Tyres from toy cars
- Large metal washers
- Wooden wheels

### Some more rolling objects

- Coins
- Fruit such as apples and oranges
- Dried gourds
- Round tins and boxes
- Pebbles and stones
- Round beads
- Metal tops from bottles, aerosols, jars
- Round corks
- A ball with a bell inside
- Nuts
- Large buttons
- Cookie cutters
- Pencils and pens
- Beakers and cups
- A roll of tape

## The Sound of Metal

Metal objects are essential for most treasure baskets; this collection is a basket full of metal objects, many of which can be found in the kitchen.

Metal objects are fascinating to babies and young children. The shaking of a bunch of keys can attract the attention of a baby, even if she is crying. Spoons, keys, silver utensils all have handles to be grasped and reflections to be explored. The coldness of metal is another feature as the sense of touch is stimulated. The many sounds of metal vary from a jingle to a crash.

Watch the child carefully select an item such as a plug on a chain and carefully replace it with amazing concentration and accuracy.

Be aware! This basket makes a noise!

### Try some of these familiar objects

- Spoons of various sizes and shapes
- Keys in bunches on strings and rings
- A plug with a chain attached
- Small whisks
- A tea strainer
- Metal cruet set
- Bulldog clips
- Costume jewellery
- Mirror with metal frame
- Tin lids
- A metal ash tray
- Small baking tins
- A garlic press

### Try some of these more unusual objects

- A dog chain
- A whistle on a chain
- A lemon press
- A bunch of bells
- Curtain rings
- A small metal funnel
- A potato masher
- A metal jug
- A small saucepan with lid
- Tins with lids
- A small sieve
- A metal toy car
- Child's garden trowel
- A short piece of chain
- A large metal bolt (new)
- A doorknob

*NB – you could spray a basket silver for this collection*

### Some musical instruments

- A triangle
- Bells
- A small cymbal
- A chime bar
- Wind chimes
- A bike bell
- A harmonica

## **The Bathroom Basket**

Modern bathrooms are good sources of natural materials – you will find wood, steel, rubber, bristle, cotton, wool, shell, as well as natural perfumes and oils. This basket could be used to explore scents as well as taste, touch, sight and hearing.

For younger children, the basket will be a sensory exploration. Older children will begin to see the connection between the items in the basket and the care of our bodies, leading to discussions of health and hygiene,

Containers within the collection will allow for emptying and filling, pouring and tipping, thus expanding wrist and arm movements.

### **Try some of these natural objects**

- Plugs and chains
- Pieces of loofah
- Nail brush
- Tooth brush
- Pieces of cork
- Metal dishes
- A metal beaker
- Bath brush
- Large bottle tops
- Small baskets
- Big stones and pebbles

### **Try some of these objects and scents**

- Empty perfume bottles (thick glass jars only)
- A makeup brush
- A shaving brush
- A stress roller
- Shells
- A large powder puff
- Nail file
- Small cloth bags with lavender, cloves, rosemary etc.
- Cloth bag of pot pourri
- Dried flowers
- A small wooden boat
- Cups and mugs
- Funnels
- Emery board

### **Fabrics**

- A piece of towelling
- A flannel
- A piece of woollen cloth
- Cotton wool

## The Brush Basket

Brushes come in all shapes and sizes, with soft and stiffer bristles. With a bit of thought and imagination, you will be surprised how many brushes you can collect for this basket!

Some will be soft and tickly, and babies will love to stroke the sensitive skin of their cheeks, hands or feet with them. Brushing and stroking has a calming effect, so the basket could be offered when a child has become over stimulated or excited.

The types, sizes and shapes of the different brushes will give practice in holding and manipulating objects. Older children will often mime the action as they handle each brush.

NB Some brushes have long handles or sharp ends and it may be safer to cut these down before adding them to the basket.

### Try some of these brushes

- Shaving brush
- Hairbrush (with natural bristles and wooden back)
- Baby's hairbrush
- Pastry brush with wooden handle
- Dustpan brush (wooden handle)
- Small shoe brushes (several)
- Makeup brushes
- Painting brushes

### Why not add some laminated pictures

- A baby
- A mother
- A father
- A boy
- A girl
- A dog
- A cat

### More brushes

- Wooden nail brush
- Floor scrubbing brush
- Wallpaper brush
- Suede cleaning brush
- Bottle brushes (several sizes)
- Decorating brushes in different sizes
- Clothes brush
- Stencil brush
- Washing up brush
- Cat or dog brush (new!)

NB Disinfect the brushes regularly and leave to dry before returning to baskets.

### **A Sense of Smell**

Smell is a powerful sense, and on which we offer less frequently than the others. Older babies and children love to have things to smell, and may become very attached to certain perfumes and perfumed objects.

The addition of smelling jars and bags enables you to offer sensations without the need to intervene in their use. Older children will enjoy guessing what is in the jars and bags.

Because there is a risk that the contents of this basket might be tasted, it may be wiser to offer it to older children who are able to understand about what they can eat!

N.B. Check for any allergies before deciding what to include in this basket.

#### **Try some of these natural objects:**

- Nutmegs
- Lavender bags
- Lemons or oranges
- Perfumed candles
- Soaps
- Small bags with spices, such as cinnamon stick, peppercorns, cardamoms, cloves, coffee beans.
- Herbs such as bay leaves, basil, parsley
- Essential oils

#### **Smelling Jars**

- Make some smelling jars from small jars. Baby food jars are ideal.
- Put a few drops of massage oil, peppermint oil, rose water or perfume on a piece of cotton wool in each jar.
- Make a few holes on the lids with a hammer and nail and fix securely on each jar.
- Gauze fastened with elastics band also works.

Stick or hang a picture of the object on the outside of the jar or bag. Add to your collection with herb filled pillows and soft toys.

## **A Sound of Music**

This basket is for budding musicians and could be used indoors or out. You don't need bought instruments to make music, so start with natural materials. You can then add a few simple instruments, making them with the children or buying a few at a time to build up a collection.

Give the children plenty of time to explore the sound makers by themselves, before adding instruments.

A useful addition is a simple tape recorder with nursery rhymes and songs, or a short piece of atmospheric music. Teach the children how to use this by themselves and they can add the tape to their own music or play an accompaniment to the tape.

### **Try some of these natural sound makers:**

- Paper
- Dry leaves
- Sand paper
- Small boxes, tubes, tins filled with stones, rice etc
- Curtain rings (wood or metal) on a string
- Chain
- Wooden baby rattles
- Wooden beads on a string
- Foil
- Ribbons to wave
- Thick bamboo
- A small rain stick
- Small blocks of wood
- Empty tins and boxes

### **Try some of these simple instruments**

- Bells
- Trainagles
- Wind chimes
- Chime bar
- Claves or rhymes sticks
- Chopsticks, pencils
- Shakers and maracas
- Castanets
- Small drum
- Guiro
- Tambourine
- Bird whistle
- Kazoos
- Small bongo drums
- Sandpaper block
- Click-clacks

Music making is noisy! You may want to offer this basket for use outside on a blanket, or at a time when the resulting sounds can be managed.

## Light and Heavy

The exploration of weight and mass is an important part of science for young children; this collection should contain extremes of weight as well as pairs of similar objects with different weights.

Physical exploration of the contents of such a basket should come before the abstract concepts of comparison and balance.

Children of all ages love picking up and handling heavy things and can do safely if seated on a rug or carpet (or grass outside). The lighter things provided can be shaken, waved or tossed in the air.

This basket could be combined with the 'will it float' basket.

### Try some of these objects

- Big stones
- A weight for scales
- Wood pieces
- A paperweight
- Tissue paper
- An empty film can
- An empty bean can
- A paper back
- Feathers
- Paper can
- Paper
- A plastic bottle
- A glass bottle
- A can of beans
- A hardback book
- A metal toy car
- Bubbles
- Leaves
- Gauzes

### Suitable Fabrics

- Net
- Gauze
- Silk
- Sari material
- Chiffon scarves
- Flags and bunting
- Crepe paper streamers

This basket is particularly suited for use out of doors' where the light, floaty objects can be watched and enjoyed. There is also a place for variety of gauzy, floaty fabrics, ribbons and streamers, which the children can explore by running, tossing, waving, floating and twirling. The concept of heavy things can also be explored outside, if children are involved in getting out and putting away equipment and toys. However take care!

## Feel This

This 'feely' basket contains all sorts of textures and fabrics on their faces, arms and legs as well as their hands.

Older children can be encouraged to develop the language of textures through this basket. They associate texture much more with their feelings and experiences than many adults do, so be aware of this as you watch and listen to their responses. Make a swatch of small pieces of fabric, so the children can look at it like a book.

These fabrics may need more frequent washing/cleaning, as they will be used as comfort and security objects by some children.

### Start with some of these (small pieces are best)

- Fleece
- Cotton
- Fur fabric
- Suede
- Satin
- Wool
- Plastic
- Bubble wrap
- Sweatshirt
- New curtain
- Leather
- Cotton
- Hand kit
- Lurex
- Thin foam
- Elastic

### Then you could add

- Brocade
- Gauze or chiffon
- Fabric with beading, sequins, embroidery
- A baby sock
- Silky stuff
- Patent leather
- Corrugated card
- Ribbons of satin, lace, velvet
- Wedding dress
- Camouflage netting
- Towelling
- Fake snakeskin
- Polystyrene sheet
- Cellophane
- Sandpaper

Use white glue to make patterns on pieces of card (spots, wiggles, lines, letters) or stick sandpaper shapes and letters to wood or thick card.