

TREASURE BASKETS

A treasure trove for the senses

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Treasure baskets or boxes offer young children a treasure trove of interesting items to explore using their five senses.

A treasure basket is a collection of objects and items from around the home. Boxes can be themed to a time of year or project or they can be an eclectic mix of items. This cost-effective alternative to conventional toys offers limitless investigations and learning possibilities for babies and toddlers.

From about the age when babies can sit up to well into toddler-age, children will be fascinated by a range of sensory objects.

The treasure basket can be used indoors and outdoors and can be reinvented as often as required to maintain children's interest.



Seeing voice and writing learning stories

Closely **observe** the baby or toddler whilst engaging with the treasure.

Notice what is **sparking interest** and what they do with the items.

What **skills** are they using? Is the child concentrating and interested?

Can you see learning **dispositions** such as engagement, interest and decision making?

Is the baby or toddler **communicating** with you, are they babbling/repeating the describing words that you are saying?

Have a look at the MOSAIC Learning Story below about exploring treasure..

Whilst on my crawling explorations today, I made a very interesting discovery - a treasure basket full of bangles! Lying on my tummy, I repeatedly took items out of the basket and put them back in again. I repositioned into a sitting position and held a bangle in each hand and waved them excitedly in the air as I bounced up and down on my bottom. I shouted 'ahhhhh' and laughed to express my excitement! I was engaged in my play for at least 10-15 minutes.



A basket full of bangles!

Learning goals achieved:

- 1 I am discovering, exploring and refining my gross and fine motor skills.
- 2 I use a range of body movements, facial expressions, and early vocalisations such as babbling to show feelings and share information.
- 3 I can engage, explore and experiment in the environment.
- 4 I can use physical skills including skills to manipulate objects and materials
- 5 I can concentrate and I am purposeful and absorbed in my play.

Dispositions/Schemas

Communication

Manipulating

Investigating

You can help me build on this by:

Now that I have found the confidence to explore the room, position lots of interesting provocations for me to find. Put a variety of objects in shallow boxes so that I can empty and fill and use my senses to explore. Teach me the names of items to build my developing vocabulary.



Read by parent

[Click here to read more >](#)

Parent's comment: Oh what a great idea! I will get some old shoeboxes and add some bits and pieces- that should keep him busy for a while 🤔😂

What learning dispositions and skills will children develop?

- Using the 5 senses- touch, taste, smell, sound, sight
- Working out schemas
- Hand-eye coordination
- Language development
- Making decisions and choices
- Gross and fine motor skills
- Concentration
- Imagination
- Sorting and classifying.



What can I put in a treasure basket?

Common sense needs to prevail here so there should be nothing toxic, dangerous (e.g. sharp) or a choking hazard in the basket. You should never leave a baby or toddler unattended with their treasure box as these are real things, not baby toys and babies learn best if they can share the experience with you.



Sounds

Double strip of Velcro for them to pull apart
Homemade rattles made from small plastic bottles filled with rice and lentils

- Bell
- Whistle
- Wooden recorder
- Triangle
- Drum
- Egg shakers or mini maracas
- Greaseproof paper
- Pots and lids

Smells

- Lemon
- Orange
- Lavender bags in muslin
- Large fresh bay leaf or mint leaf
- Herb bags
- Scented ribbons
- Cinnamon sticks in a muslin bag
- Potpourri bag

Textures

- Different materials; shiny, leather, tweeds, furry etc.
- Velvet jewellery bag
- Sock or glove that they can put their arm into
- Knitted squares
- Loofah or sponge
- Woolen ball
- Flannel
- Small bean bags
- Selection of brushes (nail, make up, paint, tooth, shoe)
- Purse

Household items

- Wooden spoons
- Whisk
- Metal linked measuring spoons
- CD's
- Keys/key rings
- Egg cups
- Tea strainer
- Shower puffs
- Glasses case
- Bottle brush
- Velcro/bendy rollers
- Bath plug and chain
- Spatula
- Costume jewellery
- Curtain rings
- Jewellery boxes with lids

Natural items

- Seashells
- Pine/Fir cones
- Large stones
- Driftwood
- Large chestnuts
- Loofah
- Large feathers
- Large corks
- Small baskets
- Small wooden boxes

'Bringing all the pieces of quality early education together'



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