

The Benefits of Sensory Water Play



Autistic children who enjoy sensory play usually love playing in water – and it’s easy to see why! Unlike anything else, the feel, sound, reflection, and even smell of water hit all the senses at once.

It’s World Ocean Day, so to celebrate the biggest body of water on our beautiful blue planet, let’s take a closer look at the benefits of water sensory play, and how you can make it a regular part of your sensory play activities.

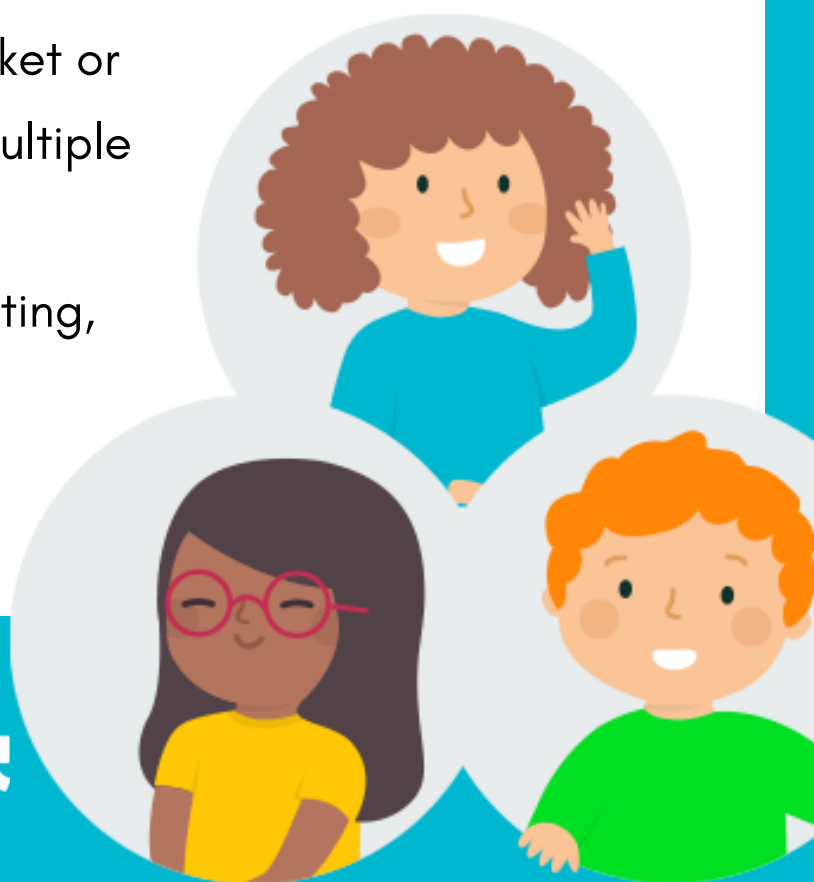
Benefits of water sensory play

For autistic and non-autistic children alike, water play can be beneficial for a number of key reasons:

It provides multiple stimulations:

Better than a weighted blanket or textile toy, water provides multiple forms of sensory stimulation.

This can be fascinating, exciting, and calming all at the same time.



It develops hand-eye coordination:

As children learn to pour, squeeze, and control water, they develop hand-eye coordination skills that improve their sense of accuracy and control.

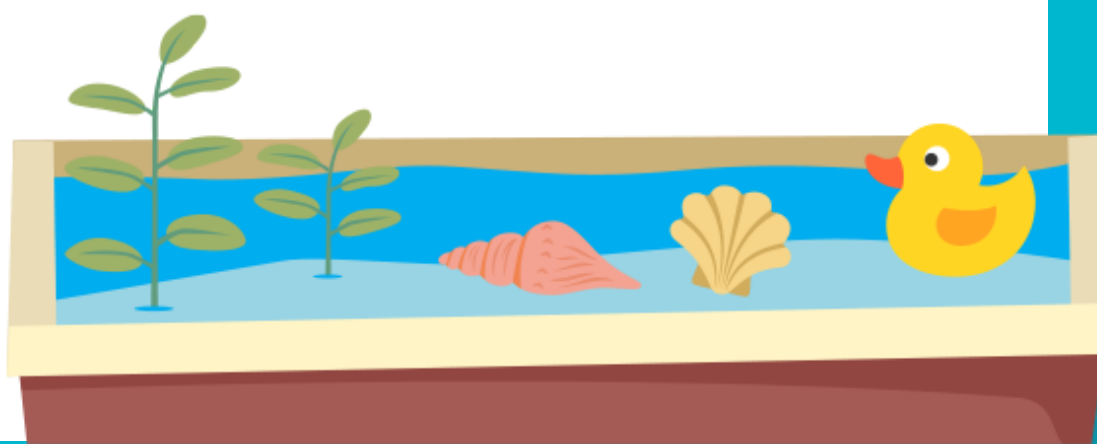
It enhances concentration and focus:

Water play is something many children get completely lost in, and anything that holds their attention for a long period of time can help them learn to concentrate.

It builds social and communication skills:

Water play can be experienced alone, but it's a great opportunity to play with other children too. By engaging in social and cooperative activities, autistic children can learn a lot about interacting with others.

It's worth remembering, however, that even a small amount of water can be dangerous if children are left unattended. So, whenever you use water as part of sensory play, make sure to be extra cautious.



Fun water sensory activities for autistic children

There are so many fun ways autistic children can play and learn in the water:

Sensory water tub:

Fill a tub with water, then add things like seashells, little toys, and even water plants. Children will love exploring the textures and temperatures with their hands.

Go fishing:

Put some fish-shaped toys in a tub of water or paddling pool, and ask the child to catch them with a net or bucket.



Walking in water:

In a pool, set up games that involve the child transferring objects from one side to the other. They'll love the sensation of walking through the water.

Sponge play:

Fill a bowl with water and ask the child to squeeze the water into a sponge, then transfer it to another bowl or paddling pool. This is also great for developing those finger muscles.

Water beads:

Water beads can be great fun. Just leave them in water for a while and they'll soak up the liquid, becoming smooth and jelly-like. Then ask the child to sort them into bowls by colour.

