Sensory play is a hot topic keeping you and your family peaceful and busy for hours. I love sensory bins, sensory bottles and these sensory bags with hair gel. They’re great for all ages!

6+ Sensory Bins for under $30 – with tons of other ideas!
Sensory bins are the best for keeping small hands busy. You can switch out all the “fillers” and create tons of different combinations! Sensory bins are so versatile and are perfect for all little learners.

I could not WAIT to get to Dollar Tree and try all of these sensory bins. I went armed with a list – HA! That was funny that I actually thought I would follow a list. The list also was for under $20. Again – HA! Mine was $40, BUT I bought some stuff that wasn’t for my sensory bins and since everything was $1, it was easy for me to take it out of my total and get a new total. Here is how I started:

Sensory Bins Shopping List
• 6 bins (I know I said that this would make 6+ – sit tight, we’ll get to that)
• 2 bags of cotton balls (I ended up using only 1)
• 2 bags of dry beans (again, I ended up using only 1)
• 1 bag of pasta (I bought Ziti)
• 1 bag of creepy crawlies
• 1 bag of lizards / frogs (obviously these and the previous ones can be switched out with anything – this is just what D likes)
• 2 sets of 3 rubber ducks
• 1 set of play kitchen tools
• 1 set of tongs (D calls these “pinchers”…he loves to play with ours at home)
• 1 box of baking soda
• 1 bag of decorative rocks
• 1 bag of decorative sand
• 1 bag of decorative pebbles
• 1 set of coffee scoops
• 1 set of 3 toothbrushes
• 1 container of oatmeal
• 1 bottle of vinegar
• 1 set of funnels
• 2 cans of shaving cream
• 1 foam alphabet set

Again, you can pick other stuff. If you have a girl and want fake jewelry, whatever. Use your imagination! 😊

So first I am going to show you the 6 bins that I made, then I will give you ideas for the “+” bins. I will have to run to the Dollar Tree again and pick up 1 or 2 more bins that will act as “messy bins.” The bins that need to be switched out and can’t hold certain stuff (ie, clean mud, shaving cream, water, etc).

The first one I tackled was rocks and sand. I was super excited about this one because of the pretty colors I picked out.

Next, we loaded up the bin with dry oatmeal. You could very well use wet oatmeal, but don’t reuse it. You would have to toss it out after you played with it but I bet it would be very fun.
Next up was beans! I don’t know why, but beans are my favorite sensory item. Maybe it’s because it was one of the first that I used when I was a developmental therapist? They are heavy but not too heavy and they’re cold. I even like playing in the bean bin! We added the toy kitchen utensils and a scoop in this one.

Next was cotton balls and rubber duckies. I wrote numbers on the bottom of the rubber ducks because we’ve been having some problems with a few numbers. He wasn’t too thrilled with this one, (probably because it makes the least amount of mess) but he’ll come around 😊

Finally, we did dry pasta and a mini foam board I found that he could put the letters into. I love this one! We are trying to learn the difference between numbers and letters and this one is awesome because it has letters and numbers.
*Baking soda and vinegar is just awesome together. This will be in my “messy bin” (the bin that needs to be cleaned out after every use!)
*Shaving cream is also awesome and will be a part of the messy bin.
*The toothbrushes will be in a soapy water messy bin with his cars so he can wash them.
*The funnels can really go into any bin. D found a home for them in the oatmeal bin! Other things we will do in the messy bin:

- Clean mud (shaved bar soap and torn up toilet paper mixed with water)
- Baking soda and water (3:1)
- Play dough (homemade or otherwise)
- Water beads (these are found at most craft stores and some dollar stores)
- Pumpkin guts
- Hair gel
- Cooked spaghetti noodles

The opportunities for sensory play are ENDLESS! You can also add any small plastic toys really to these sensory bins. I could go on for hours on sensory activities.

**Sensory Bottles Shopping List**

- Dry pasta
- Alphabet beads
- Hot glue gun with glue sticks
- Glitter
- Colored sand
- Food coloring
- Baby oil
- Glass beads/marbles
- Dry rice
- Pony beads
- Colored rocks/gravel
- Baby shampoo
- Water
- Empty water bottles

Add water, food coloring, hand soap or baby shampoo and your favorite items.
Sensory balloons – otherwise known as stress balls – are a great addition to sensory play. You can mold, squish and manipulate them. I love when my kids bust them out because they’re a great stress reliever for me, too!

Black beans
*Cloud dough
*Play doh
*Rice
*Water beads

You also should grab a funnel because it will help you a lot – trying to do this without one is pretty frustrating. Just make sure you grab a funnel with a big enough hole for the beans. And as always with my activities, please be smart 😊 After I filled the balloon, I put it inside another balloon to be extra safe.

Supplies for Sensory bags with hair gel
- Sandwich bags
- Food coloring
- Clear (or any color) hair gel
- Packing tape

All we did was squirt some hair gel into some sandwich bags and added a few drops of food coloring. Then you let out all the extra air and zip it shut. After I pried it from Dylan’s hands, I taped them up on the back door. The sun will look so cool shining through the colors!

Reference: mostlyundercontrol.com
For more information on A World of Sensory Play
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