A Shared Vision
Partners in Pediatric Blindness & Visual Impairment

Cinnamon Applesauce Ornaments

An easy holiday craft for the whole family

Homemade cinnamon applesauce ornaments are an easy holiday craft for the whole family. They're perfect for hanging throughout the house, on the holiday tree, or attaching to a present – and your house will smell like the holidays!

With each step, we provide sensory suggestions for you to try with your child. You can follow one or all of the suggestions – touch, taste, see, smell, and hear.



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Utensils

- Medium mixing bowl
- Measuring cups
- Mixing spoon or spatula
- Rolling pin
- Two baking sheets covered in parchment paper or silicone baking mats

Ingredients

- 1 cup smooth applesauce, plus more for blending
- 1¼ cups cinnamon (about two 4-ounce containers)

Recipe	Suggested Sensory Directions
1. Gather the ingredients and utensils.	 Touch your utensils. What do they feel like? Are their textures rough or smooth? Does the mixing bowl feel warm or cold?  What happens when you bang the utensils together or against the bowl? What sounds do they make?  Talk about your kitchen utensils. Are you using a glass or metal bowl? A wooden spoon? Plastic measuring cups? Compare the different materials.
2. Pour applesauce into a one-cup measuring cup.	 Smell the applesauce. It should smell like apples!  Is the jar of applesauce heavy or light? Twist the lid off and let your child feel the puree inside. Is it wet or cold?  If your child isn't already licking the applesauce off their fingers, put some on your finger and touch it to their lips.

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Recipe	Suggested Sensory Directions
3. Pour the applesauce into your mixing bowl.	 Listen for the sound the applesauce makes when you pour it into the bowl.  Describe the smooth texture.  What color is the applesauce? Apples are usually red or green, but the insides are yellow! Applesauce in a dark bowl is easier to see than in a light-colored bowl because of the visual contrast.
3. Measure out 1¼ cups of cinnamon.	 Sniff the cinnamon. It's so spicy it might even tickle your nose or throat and make you sneeze.  Touch the cinnamon. It's soft and powdery.  Watch your child's reaction to the cinnamon. Is it smiling? Grimacing? Turning toward or away from it? Cinnamon has a very strong scent and might be overwhelming for some children.
4. To make sure you have an even amount of cinnamon, bang the measuring cup on your work surface so the cinnamon settles in the cup and then level off the top with a knife. Pour the cinnamon into your bowl.	 Talk about the noise it makes when your measuring cup strikes your work surface.
5. Mix the cinnamon and the applesauce until it's well blended. Let your child help you as you stir by inviting them to put their hands over yours. Use your hands to form the dough into a ball.	 The dough should feel moist in your hands but not too sticky. If it's crumbly add more applesauce and mix again until you have the right consistency. Invite your child to touch the dough with their hands or feet.  Describe your actions as you are stirring and mixing the dough.

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Recipe	Suggested Sensory Directions
6. Preheat oven to 200° F.	 Talk about how the oven is getting warm.  When the oven is preheating listen together for the sound of the “beep,” and you’ll know it’s ready to bake.
7. Sprinkle cinnamon on your work surface so the dough doesn’t stick to it. Let your child shake the container.	 Point out how the cinnamon looks on your work surface. Does the color stand out or blend in?
8. Roll out the dough with the rolling pin to ¼ inch thick.	 This is a good opportunity to practice hand under hand – an activity that will encourage your child’s sense of touch.  First, let your child touch the rolling pin with their hands or feet.  Then, let your child listen to the sound of the rolling pin on your work surface.  Invite your child to rest their hands on top of yours as you roll the dough. Your child can remove their hands at any time because sometimes new sensations might be uncomfortable at first.  Describe how your hands are pushing the rolling pin back and forth across the dough.
9. Cut the dough using desired cookie cutters. Simple shapes like stars, trees, and gingerbread people work best, or you can make handprints or footprints. Use a regular-size plastic straw to punch a hole in the top of the ornament for the string.	 Let your child press their hand or foot into the dough.

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Recipe	Suggested Sensory Directions
10. Carefully transfer the ornaments to the cookie sheet with a small spatula. Repeat with remaining dough. Store any remaining dough in a Ziploc bag in the refrigerator.	
11. Bake ornaments for two hours or until completely firm. You can also air-dry them for about 10-12 hours and then carefully flip them over and dry them another 10-12 hours until completely dry. Depending on how moist the dough is and the humidity level of your home, it might take longer to dry the ornaments.	 Does your house begin to smell like the holidays because of the cinnamon?
12. Tie a ribbon or string through the top of each ornament. Hang the ornament in a place that you and your child can return to and touch, smell, and remember making together.	

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