A Shared Vision
Partners in Pediatric Blindness & Visual Impairment

Hot Cocoa Mix

Stay warm and cozy with this instant hot cocoa mix
made with only three ingredients

This hot cocoa recipe is super simple and fun, with only three ingredients. After making this mix, you can enjoy many hot and yummy mugs of hot chocolate around the fireplace, or after you've built a snowman in the freezing cold. Store leftover hot cocoa mix in an airtight container for up to three months. Small jars of this mix make sweet gifts for your favorite friends, relatives, and teachers!

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



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Utensils

- Large mixing bowl
- Measuring cups
- Mixing spoon or whisk
- Teaspoon
- Mug

Ingredients

- 1 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 cups powdered milk or instant nonfat dry milk
- 2 cups confectioner's sugar
- Water
- Mini marshmallows or a candy cane

Recipe	Suggested Sensory Directions
1. Gather the ingredients and utensils.	 What do the utensils 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? Describe what the utensils are going to be used for."The spoon is for stirring the ingredients. The cups are different sizes for measuring the exact amounts."  Try tapping the cocoa container with the spoon or shaking it with the lid on. Does the cocoa make a sound?  Your child may enjoy nesting or stacking the measuring cups. How many are there? Compare the sizes – which one is the biggest? The smallest?

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2. Open the container of cocoa powder and spoon one cup into the measuring cup. Dump the powder into your bowl.	 Smell the cocoa powder. Just a little sniff is enough for your little one's nose.  Use hand under hand as you measure out the cocoa powder and dump it into the bowl. Trace some shapes with your fingers in the powder that falls on your work surface.  How can you add visual contrast? The brown powder will contrast with a lightly colored work surface.  Dip your finger or put a little bit on your child's finger and taste the cocoa powder. It's bitter. What will make it sweet? A recipe is about cause and effect.  If your child is hesitant about touching the cocoa powder, put some inside a Ziploc bag and let them touch the outside of the bag.
3. Open the powdered milk and measure two cups into the mixing bowl. With a spoon or whisk, stir the two ingredients together.	 Nonfat dry milk comes in a box or a bag. Let your child feel the container or shake the bag.  Listen for any sounds the powdered milk makes when you tap the container or shake the bag.  If any powdered milk spills on your work surface, let your child touch it with its hands or feet. Trace some shapes.  Talk about where milk comes from. It may come as a liquid or a powder; it might be wet or dry. Whatever form it takes, it comes from cows!  Even in its powdered form, milk smells creamy and sweet, the perfect partner for the unsweetened cocoa powder. Which smell do you like better?

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Recipe	Suggested Sensory Directions
4. Open the bag of confectioner's sugar, measure out two cups, and dump them into the mixing bowl. With a whisk or spoon, stir the mixture together.	 Confectioner's sugar usually comes in a plastic bag so it's easy for your child to touch, poke, or pound with a spoon. Is the bag heavy or light?  As you measure out the sugar, count out loud how many spoonsful it takes to fill a measuring cup. How many cups of sugar do we need? Use action words like "stir," "scoop," "mix" and "dump" to label what you and your child are doing. "Oh, the sugar is so powdery it's making a mess all over our countertop! Good thing I wore my apron, so I don't get my clothes dirty."  Let your child touch the confectioner's sugar with its hands or feet. Trace some shapes.  Taste the confectioner's sugar. Sprinkle some on your child's finger. It's sweet!  Using hand under hand, stir the ingredients in the bowl. Allow your child to feel what direction you are stirring; if you're using a whisk, your child will feel your arm go up and down as you incorporate air into the powder.  Explain that stirring the ingredients together creates cocoa mix!  How does it taste? When the ingredients are mixed, they taste sweet and chocolatey!

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Recipe	Suggested Sensory Directions
5. Over the stovetop or in the microwave oven, heat one cup of water to desired temperature for hot cocoa.	 The stove is HOT. A microwave oven makes food HOT. This is a good time to talk about kitchen safety. Some appliances are for adults' use only.  Let your child watch as the stove heats up the water in the kettle, or the microwave oven heats a mug of water.  Listen for the sound of the kettle's whistle. It gets louder as the water begins to boil and creates steam. It says, "I'm ready. I'm ready! Are you listening to me? I'M READY!" The microwave uses loud beeps to tell you when it's ready.
6. Put ½ cup of hot cocoa mix into a mug and fill with one cup of hot water. Stir the mixture with a spoon, removing any lumps. Let your hot cocoa cool to desired temperature and enjoy with mini marshmallows or a mini candy cane on top.	 Let your child watch you pour the hot water into the cup.  Talk about how you're pouring the water into the cup and stirring the cocoa to label what you and your child are doing. Does the spoon make a sound when you stir it inside your mug?  Using hand under hand, guide your child's hand toward the cup to feel the warmth from the hot chocolate.  Sniff the chocolatey steam coming from your mug.  Children with visual impairment can be very sensitive to food temperatures. If they don't like hot chocolate, you can always try making cold chocolate milk. It tastes just as good!  Mini marshmallows are yummy in hot chocolate! Try counting them as you drop them into your mug. They are squishy when they're dry but will turn gooey when they get wet. A sensory delight!

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