



INSECT SENSORY TUB

Materials you need:

- Large tub or deep tray to use for sensory play.
- Collection of rubber (or similar) insects – try and use ones that look as lifelike as possible.
- Leaf matter, greenery, grass clippings, twigs, branches, wood shavings or sawdust, smooth rocks, sand (whatever natural materials you can find). If you don't feel comfortable using the natural materials with the younger children you could try using some large pasta shapes, rice or just dry sand.
- Small tongs for older toddlers.

Setup for play:

- Place the greenery and other natural elements into the sensory tub.
- 'Hide' the insects in among the sensory materials – make it easy if you have younger toddlers.
- Encourage the children to investigate, explore and find the insects.
- Name the insects as they find them and ask if they know where to find real ones.
- See if they can repeat the insect name back to you.
- Younger toddlers and older babies will enjoy feeling around in the sand or other materials and just picking up and dropping back in. Let them explore as they wish but stay close by to provide supervision for safety.
- Challenge older toddlers to find and pick up the insects using tongs instead of hands

What are they learning with this activity?

As the children explore the sensory tub and insects they are learning to:

- Broaden their understanding of the world
- Use play to investigate and explore new ideas
- Use their senses to explore the natural environment
- Develop new vocabulary and language skills
- Strengthen eye-hand coordination and the dexterity needed to manipulate objects.

Extending the play:

- Place the insects and bugs in the block and dramatic play areas for toddlers to self-select and incorporate into their play.
- Count the legs on the insects together.
- Do some yoga poses based on insects – there are lots of ideas on the internet for inspiration. [Cosmic kids has some fun sequences incorporating different insects.](#) Just choose one or two moves to do with the younger children (don't try and do a whole video!).

