

## 10 Ideas to Encourage Language While Playing in Water, Sand, Play dough, Whatever - Messy Play

1. Follow your child's lead making different shapes with the substance or perhaps pour and dump water or sand. Don't be afraid to get dirty - it's fun. And the more you get involved, the more interactive your child will become and hopefully the more verbal! Imitate *any* sounds your child makes.
2. Talk about what is happening as you play. "Oh I dumped the water on my hand. Where's *your* hand? *My* hand and *your* hand."
3. Hide your hand under the sand or inside the play dough and ask "uh-oh, where's my hand?" Accept any communication, such as your child just trying to find your hand, but not vocalizing. Get excited! "Wow, you found it. There it is!"
4. Talk about how the material feels. "Ooh, the play dough is cold." or "Ah, the water feels warm." or "The sand is rough."
5. Hide small toys or objects inside the sand, water or play dough and have your child try to find them. Label the objects when discovered. "Oh, you found the dog."
6. If your child is working on a particular sound, (ex. /k/ sound), hide objects beginning with the target sound in the material. Encourage him to repeat the word once it's been found.
7. Make imprints in the play dough and/or sand. Talk about what is made.
8. Create roads through the sand and/or play dough for cars or animals to travel. Talk about the vehicles or animals moving fast and slow, jumping, running, etc.
9. With the play dough, find different colors and label when found. This may be done with tiny grains of sand as well.
10. Expand upon any vocalizations made by your child. I.e. If she says, "car", say "yes, you found a big car."

Extra suggestion: Filling a small tub with water and dish detergent makes for fun bubble blowing activity. Find rings to blow bubbles.