



GETTING MESSY AT DIA

What is it and WHY is it important?

Young children LOVE to get messy! They get messy while eating, creating art, playing outside and during countless other activities. And that's okay! In fact, it's an incredibly valuable way of learning. Getting messy is a way of hands-on learning and allows children to use their imagination and tap into their curiosity. When children mix red and blue on their hands, they see and understand how purple is made. Messy play allows their brains to connect the information they are learning to a tangible experience.

Plus, getting messy, dirty and muddy is good for our bodies! Jumping in puddles, scooping sand, and squeezing soft dough strengthens muscles and helps develop their gross motor and fine motor skills. Get messy WITH your kids and you'll love it too!

At DIA, we encourage messy play because:

- It engages multiple senses (like smell, sight and sounds) at once!
- It encourages problem solving
- It's a fun way to work on fine motor skills
- It improves concentration
- It is a great way for children to process their feelings
- It helps children become more body aware and learn about boundaries

Messy play creates memories and allows children to be children. And of course it's FUN!





What does Messy Play look like at DIA?

Have you ever picked up your child from school and they were in different clothes than that morning? There's a good reason that every child has extra clothes to change into at school! We love to get messy and we do it in a variety of ways. Digging in our garden, finger painting, painting our feet, exploring with play-doh, and painting with a paint brush are some of our favorite activities! Our teachers are always thinking of creative ways to help our students to explore the world around them, even if that means getting messy. So please don't worry if your child is wearing a different outfit when you pick them up at the end of the day. That just means they had a great day learning through getting messy!



Here's how you can GET MESSY at home!

For Toddlers:

- Finger paint outside
- Explore with buckets of water and sponges
- Give plastic toy animals a bath in a tub of soapy water
- Try whipped cream sensory play
- Make rainbow spaghetti
- Use paint brushes outside to "paint" the house with water

For Preschoolers:

- Make Play-Doh
- Dig in the dirt and then hose it off!
- Wash the car
- Head to the beach to create sandcastles
- Make mud pies
- Plant a garden
- Balloon painting
- Use shaving cream to stack foam blocks
- Draw a picture on the sidewalk using chalk and use a hose to wash it off
- Look for muddy puddles after it rains to jump in
- Bake together and allow them to touch ingredients like the flour and dough

Helpful Resources

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/apr2018/preschool-play-plans-mud-luscious-play>

<https://lemonlimeadventures.com/tips-handling-messy-play-like-rockstar>

<http://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/articles/2016/the-benefits-of-mud-play>

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/kids-activities-and-printables/activities-for-kids/arts-and-craft-ideas/why-messy-good.html>



About Erica

We are so lucky to have Erica Lear at DIA for 12 years! She is a Lead Teacher in an Older 2's class and serves as one of our two Mentor Teachers. One of her favorite things about working with children is hearing the funny stories and of course getting those sweet hugs all day! She is so proud when she sees her students using the Conscious Discipline skills on their own. To Erica, what makes DIA special is the teachers and administrative staff. "We all work together to make learning fun for so many amazing children."