

Play Ideas

Water balloons

Water Balloon Play can be done outside, in a bucket or over the bath or shower base. If your child is wary of getting wet, they might still like to watch you get wet!

What do you need?

Water balloons, a bucket, bath, shower base or a hard surface outside, squeeze bottle, food colouring, rubber gloves, cardboard tube/rolled up paper.

Games to try

Capture their interest with repetitive play, songs and language.

Involve your child filling the balloon. Can they do it from a squeeze bottle?

Start a game with you holding the balloon up high and pause. They might want to watch you do it, they might want to do it themselves straight away or they might just join in later.

- use a starter phrase e.g. ready, steady, drop! or 1..2..3...go!
- as the balloon bursts celebrate it with clapping, shouting 'splash' and smiling
- repeat this for as long as their attention holds
- keep to a routine of wait, count in, celebrate so they know what to expect and to build up their anticipation
- using 'Pause and Wait' is a good way to allow time for them to show anticipation and recognition of the routine

Try filling some of the balloons with coloured water (use food colouring) and see if your child can guess what colour will come out.

Drop the balloon into a basin with washing up liquid already in it. Talk about how you could make bubbles?

Talk through the sequence of handwashing. Make your own sequence for the wall with photos, drawings, magazine pictures



What will your child learn from this play?

This can help to:

- build up concentration and attention span
- support independent play
- extend language and vocabulary
- build up their repertoire of nursery rhymes/songs
- support turn taking, sharing, anticipating, sequencing and predicting

Sensory Tips

If your child doesn't like the feel of cold water put warm water in the balloon.

If they don't like getting their hands wet dry off the balloon after filling it.

Try wearing rubber or other gloves.

Model it a few times, your child may not want to do it themselves at first.

What else could you try?

Try sitting on the balloons to burst them or stomping on them with your wellies on.

Fill them with air or water and use them to paint with. It's a completely different feeling!

Try rolling them down a slope with different things at the bottom to land on – what will make them pop?

If you have a washing line outside hang them from it and try hitting them with a cardboard tube or rolled up newspaper.

Sing or play some water-based nursery rhymes/songs such as Jack and Jill, Incy Wincy Spider, 5 Little Speckled Frogs, etc.