

Smelly Jars



The aim of this activity is to:

- To give children the chance to explore and identify different scents
- To develop sensory awareness and descriptive language
- To encourage curiosity and discussion about preferences

Resources needed:

- A variety of fragrant items (e.g., lemon, rosemary, mint, ginger, vanilla essence, cinnamon stick - avoid powdered cinnamon)
- Small jars or containers
- Squares of thin paper or fabric
- String or elastic bands
- A skewer for making holes

Method

1. Choose your scented ingredients. See tips below for ideas
2. Prepare the ingredients by cutting, grating, or crushing them to release their aroma
3. Place each ingredient in a separate jar. For liquids, add cotton wool to absorb the fragrance and prevent spills
4. Cover each jar with paper or fabric
5. Secure the cover with string or elastic bands
6. Use a skewer to poke holes in the cover
7. Invite the children to sniff and explore!

Tips and ideas:

- Turn it into a guessing game by covering the jars or using a blindfold, then ask the children to identify the scent
- Encourage children to explain why they like or dislike each smell. This is great for building vocabulary and confidence
- Other ideas for ingredients: orange peel, essential oils, tea leaves, soap, coffee, lavender, rose petals, garlic, pineapple, popcorn
- Avoid powdered substances as these can be inhaled and may be harmful. Stick to non-toxic ingredients
- Some children may dislike certain smells, so introduce new scents gradually and sensitively

