

Kinetic Sand

-What is it anyways? A unique sand like substance that is easily moldable, yet free flowing, it hardens when it is squeezed, yet it melts when released. Once you touch this material, you'll want to keep your hands in it for a little while because it's so addicting.

Benefits:

1. Fine Motor Development

- pinching sand with index finger strengthens the grasp which is necessary for pencil holding
- rolling sand into balls and flattening with palm develops bilateral skills
- scooping sands with spoons and packing into little cups works on those little finger muscles and encourages hand eye co-ordination.

2. **It provides tactile input** that is calming which helps to organize the messenger neurons in the body. Because it is not messy, children usually sensitive to touch can tolerate this texture. It provides an opportunity to debrief from one activity and transition to the next, also increasing attention span.

3. **Creativity:** with open ended material the process of thinking (ideas), planning (strategies) and execution skills (putting it all action) is exercised.

4 **Imagination:** Often props are needed as prompts for children to use symbolic play as a form of entertainment, so pull out some mini animals to facilitate a whole ecosystem or environment. The next step is pretending without props. Build an ice-cream cone or bake a cake. The ideas are endless.

Safari Ltd Toob Toys or Dollar store sets:

- Science extension ideas: build a desert food chain, sort seashells into bivalves and univalves, separate carnivore from herbivore animals, excavate a dinosaur graveyard with a paint brush, classify insects according to bodies and legs
- Social Studies extension ideas: take a trip to the moon with craters and rocks, set up an first nations camp, build an egyptian tomb with pyramids or a mayan temple, build a castle with guarded knights
- Math: use 3D geometric fillable shapes to make structures and name them, make a pie or pizza and cut into fractions, use measure up cups to make equivalents,
- Fantasy: build a fairy land

5. **Speech and language interaction** is increased with parallel play with kinetic sand because both participants are at the same level making eye contact. Children will actually slow down and take deeper breaths playing with this therapeutic material. A session with this will encourage verbalizing of internal feelings and conflict.

For a comparison of 6 tactile products, Kinetic Sand from Michaels tests the best.<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uG8UkempW6k>