

Sensory Activity 2: Hunting for Treasure

Primary Goal

Developing sensory awareness of surroundings.

Secondary Goals

Developing concentration and memory; practicing matching skills; expanding language skills; developing motor skills; learning to follow simple directions.

Material

Work mat.

Several sensory “treasure” lists. Start with a sheet of sturdy construction paper or card stock. Collect small photographs or realistic drawings of objects the child can easily find in the center, both indoors and outdoors. As much as possible, choose objects that appeal to the five senses — sight, touch, sound, taste and smell. Glue four pictures on each sheet of paper, placing the pictures in a vertical line. So that the lists can withstand frequent handling, laminate them or cover them with transparent contact paper. Do not make any two lists the same, so that if two or three children are using the lists, they will not be competing with each other for the same object. You could choose objects for some lists according to sensorial themes. For example, one list could show only red objects, another list could show only objects that make sounds, and another list could show only objects that smell.

Sturdy basket with a handle. The child will use this basket to carry the treasure list and collect the treasures found.

Presentation

- This activity appeals particularly to the interests and abilities of twos 27–30 months old. It is especially useful for acclimatizing children new to the center, by helping them learn the location of materials.
- In advance, choose the list you will present. The first few times you present this



activity, use a list that contains objects located near each other — all in one part of a room, for example, or all in a certain part of the playground. Place the list in the basket.

- Ask the child to get the work mat and put it in a place you specify.
- With the child, get the prepared basket and place it on the work mat.
- Sit beside the child with the basket in front of you.
- Take the treasure list out of the basket and place the list on the work mat. Make sure the child can see the list.
- Quietly announce the focus of the activity. For example, say: “We’re going to hunt for treasure. This list shows us the treasures to look for.”
- Touch the first item on the list and look at it closely. Do not name or identify the object.
- Get up, pick up the basket, and put the list in it. Look around you for the object on the list. When you see the object, go over to it and compare it to the picture on the list. Exaggerating your motions, examine the object in a sensory way, rubbing it, shaking it or smelling it. Then put the object in the basket.
- Repeat with the second object on the list.
- Pause and smile at the child, then sit down again.
- Touch the third and fourth items on the list and invite the child to find them. For example, say: “Now you find this treasure and this treasure and put them in the basket.” Do not name or identify the objects. Focus on identifying the objects with the senses, not with language.
- Give the child time to start the activity.
- When the child begins focusing on the activity, watch quietly and let the child work undisturbed. Do not intervene unless asked for help.
- If the child does not start or does not seem to know what to do, ask: “May I help?” Then get up with the child and look for clues. Compare the picture on the list to several nearby items until you find the one that matches. As soon as the child starts engaging in the activity, quietly stand back and let the child work on his/her own.
- When the child has found the items and returned to the work mat with the basket,



Extension 1



Extension 1

reverse the process. Invite the child to return all the objects to their proper places. If necessary, go with the child.

- After the child has returned the items to their proper places, invite the child to repeat the activity using the same list or a new list. This time, you find only the first item, then invite the child to find the other three.
- When the child had finished the activity, encourage the child to return any objects in the basket to their proper places and put the list in the basket, then return the work mat and materials to their proper places. If necessary, do these tasks with the child. This completes the activity.
- Make sure that the materials presented stay available for the child to work on again when she/he wishes. To make this activity even more intriguing, you could make a treasure chest and keep all of the treasure lists inside it.

Extension 1

- As the child acquires experience and skill, gradually introduce lists that challenge the child to go further afield — into two rooms, for example, or both indoors and outdoors.