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- GPs
- Social care

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- management of health or social care systems and services, carried out by, or under the supervision of health professional or another person, who in the circumstances owes a duty of confidentiality under an enactment or rule of law

Who to contact

Children's therapy

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Medway Community Healthcare CIC providing services on behalf of the NHS
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Tel: 01634 337593
Registered in England and Wales, Company number: 07275637

Our privacy notice is available at medwaycommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/privacy/

If you would like to view or request a copy of your patient record, please email medch.dataprotection@nhs.net or call 01634 334640. In most instances this service is free and we aim to provide the requested information within 1 calendar month. More information can be found by visiting:

medwaycommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/contact-us/information-about-me/

Medway Community Healthcare provides a wide range of high quality community health services for Medway residents; from community nurses and health visitors to speech and language therapists and out of hours urgent care.

Customer care

Please send any comments about Medway Community Healthcare services to: -

Customer care coordinator
Medway Community Healthcare
MCH House, Bailey Drive, Gillingham,
Kent, ME8 0PZ

t: 01634 334650

medwaycustomer care@nhs.net

All contact will be treated confidentially
This information can be made available in other formats and languages. Please email medch.communications@nhs.net

Ref: MCH 639



Your guide to messy play with food ideas to get you started

Patient information booklet – children's therapy team



Messy play – why is it important?

- Children learn through play.
- It is also a form of communication.
- Play allows your child to explore new materials and their environment.
- Messy play allows children to experience different sensations, such as smell, touch, taste and sound.
- The aim of such play is to allow your child to become familiar with foods in a fun and relaxed way.

Ground rules

- Never force or expect your child to eat the play material.
- You may role play tasting but never ask 'you try?'
- Try to avoid cleaning your child until the end of play.
- Every small step counts – this will be a relatively slow process. Allow your child time.
- All foods used should be edible.
- Use family foods and leftovers to keep costs low.
- Be positive and try to join in the fun.

Teddy bears picnic

Ask your child to feed their favourite toy, such as teddy, train or car.

- they may want to feed you.
- setting up a picnic, inside or out, provides a relaxed and fun environment.

Farmyard fun

- use foods to make up scenes for play, e.g. wet Weetabix with milk to make 'mud' for the animals to play in.
- add blue food colouring to cornflour goo or wet icing to make a pond for ducks.
- break up shredded wheat to make hay for the horses.

Finger painting

Use foods as paint to decorate paper, plates or fabrics:

- tomato and brown sauce.
- beans
- gravy
- chocolate spread
- Jam

Magic potions

Encourage your child to make 'magic potions' by mixing weird and wonderful food combinations. They can pretend to be wizards and witches by dressing up.

Making music

Use foods to make musical instruments. For example:

- Pouring crunchy cereal or sweets into empty jars/boxes/sweet tubes to act as shakers.
- Pouring breakfast cereals or rice onto a baking tin to make 'rain' sounds.
- Adding milk to puffed rice breakfast cereal to hear it 'pop'.

Basic cookery

Try to do basic recipes together. For example:

- spreading jam or chocolate spread on biscuits, toast or crisp bread.
- decorating cup cakes with icing and sprinkles.
- making 'muddle cakes' by mixing breakfast cereals or crushed biscuits with raisins/dried fruit, melted chocolate, honey or golden syrup.
- making pasta salad with pasta, mayonnaise, ham / chicken / sausage and chopped tomatoes.
- decorating pizza bases by making faces with toppings – get your child to try mixing with their hands.

Just let them play

Allow your child to let their imagination run wild. A plastic sheet on the floor can help reduce parental anxieties around mess.

Slimy or wet foods may be less well tolerated but you can try:

- cooked rice or pasta
- jelly
- custard
- milk or squash
- mashed potato
- baked beans
- porridge
- avoid very hot food; use warm or cold foods safely.

Basic recipes

Cornflour:

- Stew: heat 4 cups water, 1 cup cornflower and ½ cup sugar over a medium heat until it is jelly-like. Add food colouring.
- Goo: Add water (¼ cup) to cornflour (½ cup).

Play dough:

- Mix 3 cups flour with 1½ cups salt and 6 teaspoons cream of tartar. Stir in 6 dessert spoons of oil. Mix in 3 mugs boiling water. Allow to cool before use.

Wet Icing:

- Add water to icing sugar and mix. Colour using food colourings.