



# 101

**ATOMS**  
EDUCATION

## MESSY PLAY IDEAS

with



## ACTIVITY

### TEA TIME ROLE PLAY

#### You will need:

- Pans, bowls, cutlery, mashers, whisks, tweezers, scoops
- A tray or larger bowls to put the food in.
- Cupcake tins/trays
- Different foods e.g. spaghetti and mashed potato or cooked pasta and passata.

#### Set up:

Place the food separately in the tray or large bowls.

Place whatever cutlery, bowls, pans etc you have around the food. (Ensure you use age appropriate cutlery and avoid sharp objects)

#### Activity Ideas

Allow your baby or child to explore the food.

Encourage them to feel the texture of the food in their hands. They may put the food to their mouths and eat some - this is normal for babies and young children.

Role play making tea with your child. Allow them to lead and suggest ideas of what they want to make - it may not be the type of food that is in the tray!

Experiment with mixing the food and mashing it. Talk with your child about what happens.

Introduce vocabulary around capacity e.g. full, empty through play.

Introduce measuring using scoops or spoons. For example, how many scoopfuls will fill the cup?

**PREP TIME: 5-10 MINS**

## EARLY LEARNING

### 0-11 MONTHS

*This is the time that babies begin to explore. They will begin to touch and hold objects. Babies tend to put things in their mouths - this allows them to discover the taste and texture of objects. Using food is a safe way of allowing your baby to explore different textures as well as tastes.*

### 12 - 24 MONTHS

*Your baby may now enjoy sensory experiences through touch. They may move the food around with their hands - exploring what happens with the speed and force of their movements. They may create a lot of mess! This allows parts of the brain to form connections and develops memory and movement skills. Your child may also begin to try and feed themselves. They may grab the food and put it to their mouth. This supports self-care and early independence.*

### 2-3 YEARS

*Through squatting down to play with different objects at floor level your toddler will develop their core muscles. Core muscle strength is important for future writing skills and stamina. At this stage, your child will begin to associate words to objects in order to describe size. It is important that you demonstrate these words in your interactions.*

### 3-4 YEARS

*At this age, your child may begin to experiment with pretend play. Your child may use the food or objects to represent something else e.g. I am making some cakes. This supports imagination - which in turn supports children's ability to problem solve and to be creative in their future writing.*

*By using scoops and spoons to fill other objects, your child is developing muscle strength in their hands and arms which will support your child in their future learning - including pencil control. Through talking to your child during the activity, you can demonstrate vocabulary and talk about words associated with capacity e.g. full, empty, half full etc. Your child will begin to use these words within their play. This supports with their mathematics development.*

### 4-5 YEARS

*Your child may begin to use objects and materials to create a story in their imaginative play. They may be creative and independently invent scenarios based on their experiences. They may demonstrate that they have their own ideas and will represent them in different ways. At this stage, you could let your child be creative with different tools, utensils, objects and food within their role play. As your child becomes more confident at using vocabulary associated with capacity, you may begin to get them to order different objects from the fullest to the emptiest. If they are able to do this, you can begin to introduce measuring using non-standard units. An example of this may be asking how many spoonfuls will fill a cup. This supports your child's mathematics learning and is a pre-requisite to measuring using standard units such as millilitres.*