

Why do babies put things in their mouths?

It is with their mouths that babies first made contact with the outside world. By sucking, mouthing and handling objects the baby finds out weight, size, shape, taste, smell and sound. As they choose an object we can imagine them saying “what’s this?”. Mouthing objects helps a baby to move to the next stage in their development.



But my child may hurt themselves

No they won't, not if you have checked the objects and are sitting nearby, watching and allowing them to explore as much as they can. Most of these worries belong to the adult who has not seen how careful a small person is when exploring new things.

Small babies cannot throw things and if you see that some of the objects are heavy or the baby is in danger, you are close enough to gently move their hand or move the object away. It's about letting your child explore and take risks in a close, supervised activity.



A baby must not be left alone with a treasure basket

You need to sit nearby and enjoy watching what your baby does. How do they do it? What could they be thinking and feeling?

Sometimes your baby needs to look at your face to check that your mind and eyes are still on them. They talk to you with their eyes, even though they have no words yet.

Sometimes babies may need your help, e.g. to sit them back up again. However, you should not show your baby what to do, pick out objects yourself or direct their exploration.


Upper and Central Calderdale
Children's Centres

Treasure Baskets



Sure Start
Children's Centres
Upper and Central Calderdale

Website: www.childrencentres.co.uk



What is a treasure basket?

The treasure basket is a collection of everyday objects chosen to stimulate the different senses. It is one way of giving babies a wide range of experiences that help the brain to make connections and develop.



Babies learn from the treasure baskets by looking, touching, sucking, licking, banging, picking up and dropping. It gives babies the chance to explore and decide for themselves what they want to play with.



Babies' curiosity about the contents of the treasure basket means that they will concentrate for longer periods of time.

What could be included in a treasure basket?

The objects in the basket need to be carefully chosen and this choice is one of the adults' main roles. The aim should be to stimulate maximum interest using all of the five sense; touch, sight, sound, smell and taste.

Objects could include;

Natural Objects

Fir cones of differing sizes, large pebbles, shells, big feathers, piece of loofah, lemon, apple, pumice stone, etc.

Objects made from Natural Materials

Wooden balls, little baskets, wooden nail brush, shaving brush, household painting brush, etc.

Wooden Objects

Small boxes, clothes pegs, curtain rings, etc.

Metal Objects

Spoons, egg whisk, bunch of keys, bells, etc.

Textiles

Leather, rubber, fur, purses, tennis ball, bath plug, etc.

Paper/Cardboard

Tinfoil, small cardboard boxes, kitchen roll tubes, etc.

The areas of learning and development

Finding out and exploring

- ▶ Showing curiosity about objects and people.
- ▶ Using senses to explore the world around them.
- ▶ Engaging in open-ended activity.

Being willing to 'have a go'

- ▶ Seeking a challenge.
- ▶ Taking a risk, engaging in new experiences and learning by trial and error.

Physical development

- ▶ Turns head in response to sounds and sights.
- ▶ Gradually develops ability to hold up own head.
- ▶ Makes movements with arms and legs which gradually become more controlled.
- ▶ Rolls over from front to back, from back to front.
- ▶ When lying on tummy becomes able to lift head first, then chest, supporting self with forearms and then straight arms.
- ▶ Watches and explores hands and feet.
- ▶ Reaches out for, touches and begins to hold objects.
- ▶ Explores objects with mouth, often picking up an object and holding it to mouth.

Communication and language

- ▶ Turns towards a familiar sound then locates range of sounds with accuracy.
- ▶ Listens to, distinguishes and responds to intonations and sounds of voices.
- ▶ Reacts in interaction with others by smiling, looking and moving.
- ▶ Quietens or alerts to the sound of speech.
- ▶ Looks intently at a person talking but stops responding if speaker turns away.
- ▶ Listens to familiar sounds, words or finger plays.
- ▶ Fleeting attention from your baby, new stimulation takes their whole attention.