SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

The film, **Dreamscape at Home**, produced by **ThinkArts**, is an assemblage of sensorial experiences for babies and toddlers, which are intended to be recreated in any space.

In the following pages, we will share ways in which you can create similar experiences!

The activities should be conducted in a well-lit environment, with enough space to move and explore.

The suggested activities are the explorations of the artists behind the film and are meant as a starting point of a journey.

We encourage you to try these activities with your young ones, and in this attempt, stumble into your own discoveries!

WOOL

This piece invites a different mode of interacting with this oft-used material. Not just as a material for garments, but as a medium of play and of unexplored possibilities. The video showcases the original installation and its elements.

Touch and sight are the dominant senses for this material – the sensation of different forms of wool, the experience of seeing different coloured yarn together, the interplay of the wool and light, and how the textures of the material can be interacted with are suggested in the piece.

Balls of yarn of different colours, woollen scarves or fabric patches of knitted wool, tufts of wool (which can be created by stitching short threads of wool together) should be scattered across the activity area.

The activity area could also be made into an enclosure using a frame and a large, crocheted woollen fabric, such that there is enough light within the area, and with woollen tufts suspended from the top using strings of yarn, as in the original installation.

Explore: The toddler can use their hands to feel the texture of each element in the area. They should be given the freedom to interact with the elements as they'd like. They could brush the fabric with their hands, wrap their hands around the material, feel the sensation of the fabric against other parts of their body.

Throw & Catch: Gathering as many the tufts of wool, or small balls of yarn in their hand, the toddler can throw the elements up in the air and experience the feeling of wool falling back on their bodies or catching wool in their hands.

Unravel: With a ball of yarn, or a loosely knit fabric with the end untied, the toddler can tug on the thread and unravel the material until there is a pile of wool. They can then interact with the wool, by tangling it or by wrapping their finger around it or other such activities which come naturally to them.

Stretch & Pull: Taking woollen scarves, or knit woollen fabric, the toddler can stretch the fabric as much as possible, and experience it coming back to its original form. The material can be pulled both in the horizontal and vertical direction.

Play with Light: The toddler can experience light by holding up a woollen fabric in front of a source of light. Alternating between tightly knit and loosely knit fabric, the toddler can see how light shines through the gaps in wool. They can also expand and contract the fabric with their hands to adjust the amount of light.

PAPER

The potential of paper to be transformed into material for play is explored in this piece. A blank, white paperscape, full of possibilities is depicted in this piece. It is inspired by the original installation.

Using a paper tube, origami, and various other forms of the material, the interaction of paper with the senses of sight, hearing and touch is explored throughout the piece. This piece sets out to show, that when it comes to paper, there is always more than meets the eye.

Paper of various sizes, textures and colours should be used to explore the different activities.

Flying Tiny Bits: Take a jar & fill it 1/4th with tiny bits of thin paper. Ask children to blow in. It is fun for both, the one blowing & the one watching the papers fly when blown. Your own home-made confetti!

Surprise Crumpled Balls: Take some white papers. Colour them from one side & crumple them into a ball to hide the color side in. Take some white/coloured papers. Cut them in different shapes & crumple them into a ball.
Now spread many such crumpled paper balls around the room for children to open & discover colors, shapes, patterns etc. coming out of white crumpled paper balls.

Dodging Crumpled Ball: Encourage the toddler to use their fingers to kick the paper crumple balls as if their feet were kicking a football. This can further become a game for 2 or more players, where all players use their fingers instead of feet to kick the tiny paper ball. There can be a goal post too.

Dark Rolled Tunnel: Make a paper roll of about 3 to 4 feet. Keep the roll on the floor. Put your arm in the roll from one side. Let the toddler put her/his arm from the other side so as to touch your hand inside the tunnel. Let the length of the roll be appropriate if 2 children are playing with the same.
One could also blow tiny, crumpled paper balls in & out of the tunnel.

Super Paper Sounds: Let the toddler feel as you wrap a sheet of paper around their arms. Rub the surface of the paper when it is on the child's arm with your palm to make sounds.

Try more sounds:
The same paper sounds different when the form changes.
Thick & thin papers have very different sounds.

FOREST

Forest conjures images of trees, brooks, pebbles, animals, and nature in its element. Staying connected to nature in some way, be it in a forest, the park, the backyard or the balcony, can be a powerful form of play.

Feeling the texture of the materials of the forest, listening to them, or smelling them, can become a way of exploring the natural world.

In this piece, different materials recreating the setting of a wooded area are used for sensorial play.

Collect a few logs and an assortment of leaves, twigs, pebbles of different sizes and shapes. Use separate bags (ideally made of jute/natural fabric) to collect them.

Before using the materials, please make sure there are no sharp edges. Check the collected items for any bugs and insects. Sanitising the materials and putting them out in the sun before use is advised.

Logs: The toddler can touch and feel the bark. They can then try and walk on logs - barefeet if that is comfortable or with sports/walking shoes. Place the logs next to sturdy furniture or a wall for balance, and then encourage them to try without any aid.

Leaves: Place a bag full of dry leaves on the floor and invite the toddler to walk all over them and hear the rustling of the leaves! They can have their eyes closed for the activity as well. Later they can touch and feel the leaves with their hands, crush them, or blow on them.

Pebbles: With pebbles scattered on the ground, the toddler can carefully pick up a few, hear them rub against each other, feel the cold texture, toy with them in their hand.

Twigs: Using a heap of twigs, the toddler can pick them up and throw them on the ground, hear the snap of twigs as they are bent. Twigs of varying thickness can be used according to the toddler's physical capacity.

Forest Art: Using sheets of paper as the canvas, encourage the toddler to make their own creations with leaves, twigs and pebbles. They can create shapes, objects, or even, abstractly put the materials together.

CLAY

This is an invitation to explore playing with a ball of clay or dough to make objects from the baby's environment and also from your combined imaginations.

This piece will suggest some starting points for you to begin to play and we hope new ideas will emerge from simply mimicking some of the movements from the piece.

Playing with clay or dough can be a wonderful ritual between the caregiver and the baby. It can be a pre-bath time play ritual thereby allowing the baby to play freely and even messily or a weekend bread making plan that is followed by some dough playtime if explored in a domestic space.

Making the Dough

Take 2 cups of flour, add 1/4 teaspoon salt, mix well with a fork. Next, take 1 cup of lukewarm water and keep adding little portions to the dry mix as you fold in the ingredients with a fork. Add 1 tsp oil to the dough, then briskly knead the dough with your hands into a soft ball that is stretchy and does not stick to your fingers. Use some more oil if the dough sticks to your fingers too much.

If you cannot source terracotta clay, you may use synthetic baby bite safe clay.

Clay or dough will need to be prepared to be elastic and not too wet. Find a spot to play that is away from walls, is not carpeted and is free of furniture. If you wish you can put down a rubber or plastic sheet as well to avoid any staining. Clay or dough is easy to remove with water and soap from surfaces.

The Ball : Start with this shape and let the toddlers observe it both visually and physically. You can pick it up, roll it about and even take out clumps to make smaller balls from it. It could be interesting to take the ball, roll it along your arms or legs and do the same for your toddler, this will allow the action of rolling to sink in visually and sensorially.

Flat: Start with a ball of clay or dough. With your palms slap the ball to flatten it and arrive at a plate like shape. You may do this together with your toddler while also making sounds with your mouth each time you slap the clay. Once you arrive at the plate you can play with it further by pinching it to see what textures emerge or even squishing your fingers in to dig little holes all over it. Try to pick it up and look at each other through these holes.

Rolled: Press down on a ball of clay and roll it on the floor, letting its shape change to a snake-like long string. From here you can tear small pieces to create little towers that can be stuck on the floor or even on the palm of your hands.

You can also wear this string around your fingers, toes and wrists. Support your toddler to explore these actions as they will not be able to twirl the string at ease.

Wearing Clay: You may try to mould clay onto body parts like fingers, knees, toes and the nose. Ideally avoid the nose for the baby. Begin with a small portion of clay and see how your baby reacts to the feel of clay or dough on their body then proceed. You can simply cover a finger in clay or make a small mound on their knee.

Walking On Clay: Make a trail of small clay or dough balls and support your baby to walk on these balls thereby flattening them and as they step on the balls make a sound like a 'Plop' or 'booop'. Or 'Squish'.

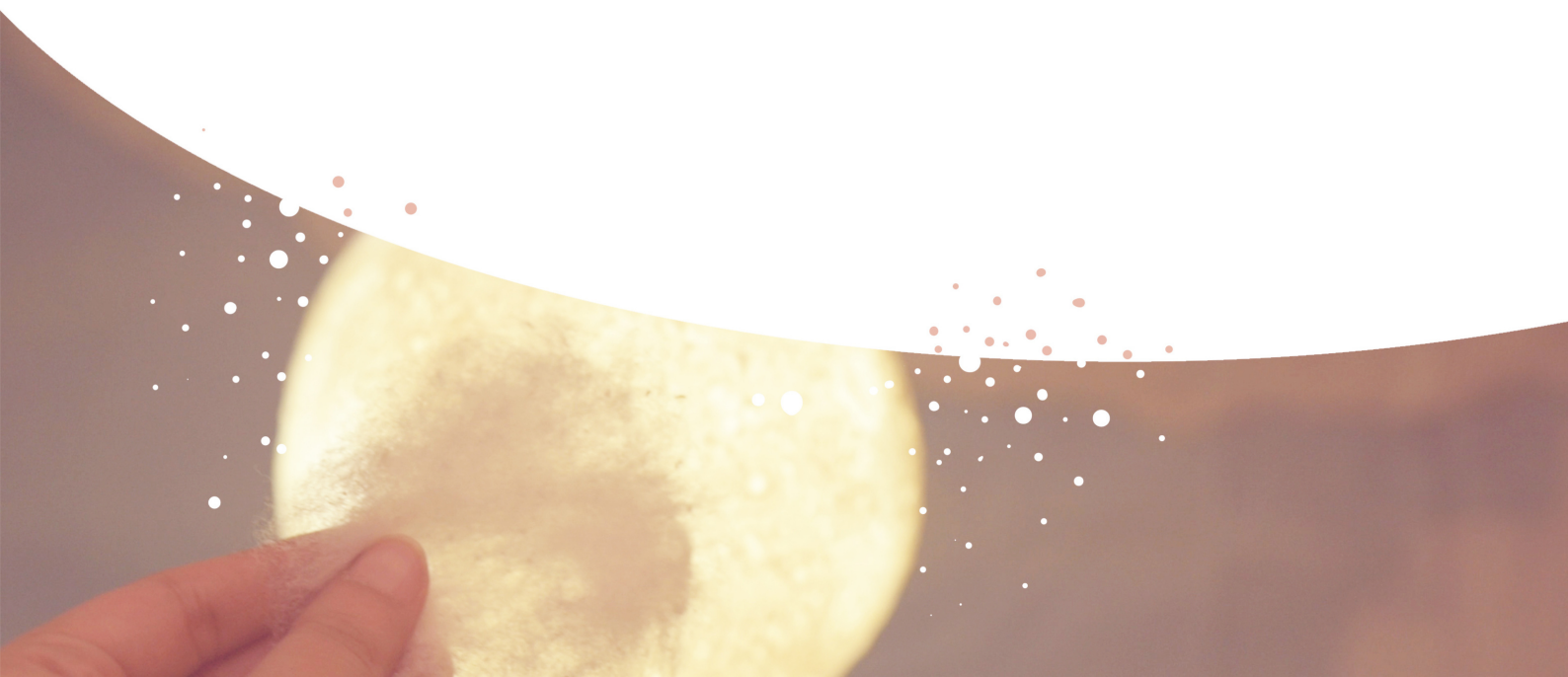
SKY

How to bring the sky down to the ground? How to play among and with clouds? Can the moon be contained in a room? These are some of the questions which the Dreamscape installation brought up. This piece uses the original installation, and showcases how the sense of touch, sight, and smell can be engaged with using the theme of 'sky', even at home.

The activity area should be in a quiet area, surrounded with shades of blues and white if possible. A ball-shaped light source, to replicate the presence of a moon or even the sun is to be hung close by.

Bundles of cotton, in various shapes and sizes should be kept within reach of the toddlers or spread out on the floor. Populating the activity area with different kinds of soft fabrics and textures in various shades of blue and white, cushions covered in downy, fuzzy fabric will help in creating the ambience.

The activity area could also be made into a tent using a frame and a large, white fabric. The fabric used must be such that light pervades the area, or a light source may be kept inside.



Touch the sky: The toddler can be left to explore the area freely using their hands. Taking each element (cotton, cushions), spending as much or as little time with each of the materials as they'd like, and experiencing the different textures around them.

Do Clouds Have A Smell?: The toddler can bring up the cotton to their nose, inhale and exhale, and try to detect if cotton has a smell, if one smells different than other. [For this activity, some of the cotton can be perfumed lightly with non-toxic fragrances, and some can be left unscented.]

Cloud Catching: Taking the wads of cotton placed in the area, the toddler can roll them into as many cotton balls as they'd like, and periodically throw them up and catch it. They can be encouraged to throw the cotton balls in slow or fast speeds alternately.

Cloud-Making: The toddler can tear apart the cotton into cloud-like shapes, varying from large 'clouds' to small 'clouds', as thick and thin as they'd like. They can then lay them out in the area, arranged in a manner of their choice, and create their own cloudy sky on the ground.

Waxing & Waning Moon: Against a light source (ideally circular in shape), the toddler can take a cotton 'cloud' in their hands and pass it across the 'moon'. They can experiment with passing more than one clouds, taking one or two cotton clouds in each hand, and crossing their arms across the light source. Encourage them to also observe how the light interacts with a more layered, dense piece of cotton and a thinner, sparse piece.