

# Tummy Time Textures

**Explore textures, colours, and actions through messy play that's hands-on, language-rich, and full of fun!**

## Let's Play!

Make tummy time exciting and engaging by creating a sensory-rich space! Lay babies on a soft blanket or mat and place a variety of safe textures within reach – think cooked spaghetti, jelly, foil, soft fabric, or even a ziplock bag of water with glitter inside.

Gently guide their hands or feet to touch and explore the materials, describing everything they feel: “Mae’n feddal – it’s soft,” or “Oer iawn – very cold!” Use simple bilingual phrases as you play, such as “Beth wyt ti’n teimlo?” / “What can you feel?” and celebrate every wiggle, reach, or babble with a big smile and encouraging words.

You can place a mirror nearby too, so they can see themselves while exploring. Keep the pace relaxed and responsive to the baby’s mood – short bursts of messy fun go a long way in building confidence, curiosity, and language.

## What you'll need:

- A soft, washable tummy time mat or blanket
- Baby-safe sensory materials such as:
  - Cooked spaghetti or mashed banana
  - Jelly or cornflour gloop
  - Soft fabric swatches (e.g., velvet, fleece)
  - Foil blanket or crinkly paper
- Ziplock bags filled with:
  - Coloured water
  - Glitter
  - Hair gel or squishy beads
- A baby-safe mirror
- Wipes and towels for easy cleanup
- A quiet, warm distraction free space



**Early developmental stages**





## This activity provides opportunities for:

### Language Development

- Introduces babies to sensory vocabulary in both Welsh and English (e.g., meddal/soft, llaith/damp, oer/cold)
- Builds early language foundations through repetition, naming, tone of voice, and face-to-face interaction
- Encourages early communication such as cooing, babbling, eye contact, and shared attention

### Cognitive Engagement

- Sparks curiosity as babies notice differences between textures, temperatures, and patterns
- Encourages cause-and-effect thinking (“When I touch this, it squishes!”)
- Develops early problem-solving as they try to reach or explore different items

### Movement and Sensory Development

- Strengthens core muscles, head control, and upper body through tummy time
- Builds fine motor skills by encouraging reaching, grasping, patting, and swiping
- Enhances sensory processing through varied textures, temperatures, and resistance



## Inclusive Play for All

Use a variety of positions depending on the child’s ability - on a caregiver’s chest, in a side-lying position, or propped with a tummy time pillow or rolled towel. Offer materials that match different sensory needs: smooth, soft, or warm textures for sensitivity, or more stimulating ones like crinkly foil or cool jelly for those who seek input.

For babies with physical disabilities, support hand-over-hand exploration or allow foot-based interaction if reaching is limited. Use mirrors, sounds, and your voice expressively to engage babies who may have visual impairments.

Include familiar textures or scents from home, and use both Welsh and home languages where possible to build trust and belonging.

## Useful Phrases:

- **Beth wyt ti’n teimlo?** What can you feel?
- **Mae’n feddal.** It’s soft.
- **Oer iawn!** Very cold!
- **Crensian!** Crinkly!
- **Sych / Llaith.** Dry / Damp.
- **Dwi’n gweld dy ddwylo bach!** I see your little hands!
- **Gwych! Da iawn ti!** Brilliant! Well done you!
- **Tybed beth sydd yma?** I wonder what’s here?
- **Gafael bach.** A little grab.



# Messy Treasure Hunt

**Explore textures, colours, and actions through messy play that's hands-on, language-rich, and full of fun!**

## Let's Play:

Place a shallow tray or tub on the floor and fill it with a messy, sensory-safe material like jelly, cooked spaghetti, porridge oats, or coloured rice. Gently hide a selection of baby-safe treasures inside – think small toy animals, soft balls, textured items, or wooden spoons. Sit with the children around the tray and encourage them to explore using their hands or scoops. Use simple bilingual prompts to guide their curiosity:

“Ble mae'r bêl?” / “Where's the ball?”

“Wyt ti'n gallu dod o hyd i'r gath?” / “Can you find the cat?”

Celebrate each discovery with excitement:

“Da iawn ti! It's shiny!” / “Mae'n sgleiniog!”

Support children as they crawl, reach, or squat to explore, building strength and coordination. Allow plenty of time for messy play, responding to their interests and reactions. This play encourages emerging movers to engage their bodies and minds while being introduced to rich sensory language in both Welsh and English.

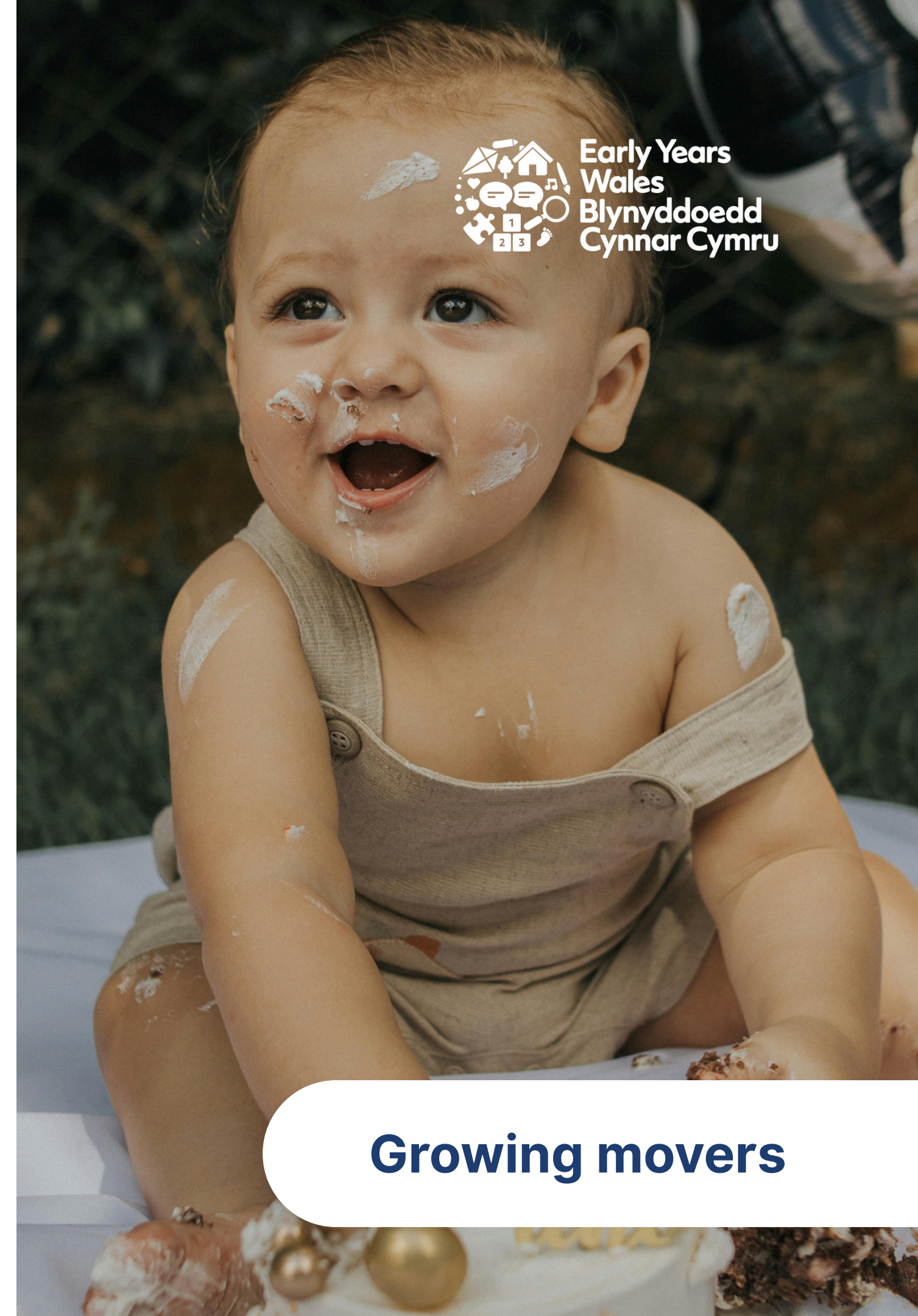
## What you'll need:

- A shallow tray, tub, or sensory bin
- Messy, sensory-safe base (e.g. cooked spaghetti etc).
- Baby-safe treasures (e.g. textured balls etc).
- Scoops, small containers, or wooden spoons for exploring
- Towels or wipes for clean-up
- Floor covering or messy mat
- Aprons or spare clothes



Early Years  
Wales  
Blynyddoedd  
Cynnar Cymru

**Growing movers**





## This activity provides opportunities for:



### Language Development

- Introduces new descriptive vocabulary: wet, squishy, sticky, soft, hidden, shiny
- Supports bilingual language exposure: using simple Welsh and English phrases helps children connect words with actions and objects
- Encourages early questioning and responding: “What did you find?” / “Beth wyt ti wedi dod o hyd iddo?”



### Cognitive Engagement

- Develops problem-solving skills as children search, guess, and identify hidden items
- Builds memory and recognition through repeated exposure to familiar objects and language
- Promotes cause-and-effect understanding: “If I dig here, I might find something!”



### Movement and Sensory Development

- Strengthens fine motor skills: grabbing, pinching, scooping, and manipulating different textures
- Encourages crawling, balancing, and shifting weight during exploration
- Stimulates tactile senses with varied textures (slippery, rough, soft, cool), helping children learn through sensory feedback

## Inclusive Play for All

Messy Treasure Hunt is easily adaptable to include children with a wide range of needs. Offer a variety of sensory bases to suit different sensitivities (e.g. dry rice instead of wet textures) and allow children to explore in ways that feel comfortable — whether that’s with hands, feet, or tools like scoops or brushes. Place trays at floor level or on low tables for accessibility. For children with limited mobility, support hand-over-hand exploration or provide treasures in easy-to-reach spots. Include culturally familiar items in the treasure tray (like small wooden animals, fabrics, or natural items) and use home languages where possible alongside Welsh and English. Make space for quiet exploration, provide visual cues, and celebrate every discovery in an inclusive, encouraging atmosphere.

## Useful Phrases:

- **Ble mae’r bêl?** Where’s the ball?
- **Wyt ti’n gallu dod o hyd i’r...** Can you find the...?
- **Beth wyt ti wedi dod o hyd iddo?** What have you found?
- **Da iawn ti!** Well done you!
- **Mae’n feddal!** It’s soft!



**Early Years  
Wales**  
**Blynyddoedd  
Cynnar Cymru**





# Create & Explore

**Explore textures, colours, and actions through messy play that's hands-on, language-rich, and full of fun!**

## Let's Play:

Set up an open-ended creative station using large sheets of paper, cardboard, or a tuff tray. Offer a variety of materials to explore, such as chunky crayons, natural paintbrushes (twigs, leaves), stampers, and sponges. Let children stand, squat, crawl, or move freely as they create marks, patterns, and textures using their whole bodies.

Encourage expressive language with playful prompts like:

“Beth wyt ti'n creu?” / “What are you making?”

“Pa liw yw hwn?” / “What colour is this?”

“Wyt ti'n gallu stampio gyda dy droed?” / “Can you stamp with your foot?”

Celebrate every attempt and idea, whether it's a bold scribble or a careful pattern. Talk about textures, shapes, colours, and feelings. Support movement by playing gentle music or inviting children to move from one station to another. Allow time for exploration and creative expression, keeping the focus on the process rather than the finished product. This activity encourages confidence, creativity, language use, and sensory discovery in a way that's completely child-led. Let their imagination lead the way!

## What you'll need:

- A safe outdoor space or nature-themed indoor tray
- Natural materials: leaves, pinecones, feathers, pebbles, twigs, bark, flowers, etc.
- Small baskets or containers for collecting and hiding items
- Scent jars (herbs, citrus peel, lavender), magnifying glass, or sensory bags



Early Years  
Wales  
Blynyddoedd  
Cynnar Cymru



**Confident movers**



## This activity provides opportunities for:



### Language Development

- Encourages vocabulary growth through naming and describing natural objects in Welsh and English.
- Repetition of key phrases helps with understanding and retention.
- Children learn to respond to simple questions and instructions, e.g., “Ble mae’r dail?” / “Where are the leaves?”



### Cognitive Engagement

- Builds memory and problem-solving as children search for and identify hidden objects.
- Develops matching, sorting, and categorisation skills (e.g., by colour, texture, or shape).
- Encourages curiosity, focus, and sustained attention through playful discovery.
- Links language with real-world sensory experiences, strengthening understanding.



### Movement and Sensory Development

- Promotes reaching, crawling, toddling, or walking as children move toward hidden items.
- Enhances fine motor skills through grasping and exploring different textures.
- Stimulates the senses: touch (rough/smooth), sight (shapes/colours), smell (herbs/nature), and sound (crunching leaves).

## Inclusive Play for All

This activity is naturally flexible and can be adapted to meet the needs of all children. Use a range of sensory materials that can be explored by touch, sight, or smell, and offer seated or supported positions for children with limited mobility. Provide verbal, visual, and tactile cues to support understanding, and allow plenty of time for children to respond in their own way. Ensure items are accessible at different levels, and adapt the pace to each child’s engagement level. Celebrate all efforts equally and model language in both Welsh and English to reflect and include all children’s cultural and linguistic identities. Using natural materials also offers a neutral and inclusive sensory experience that doesn’t rely on prior knowledge.

## Useful Phrases:

- **Ble mae’r dail?** Where are the leaves?
- **Wyt ti’n gallu gweld y garreg?** Can you see the stone?
- **Beth wyt ti wedi ffeindio?** What have you found?
- **Mae’n feddal!** It’s soft!
- **Mae’n garw!** It’s rough!



**Early Years  
Wales**  
**Blynyddoedd  
Cynnar Cymru**

