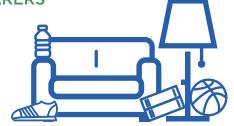
## Messy play at home



Playing at all ages can be messy and fun. But when you and your child are at home together for a while, it might be more difficult to cope with.

Being messy is a natural part of playing. It involves:

- using all your senses to explore what things look, feel, smell and sound like
- being creative and imaginative
- learning about what things do for example, what happens when colours mix or how water trickles or how bubbles float
- feeling satisfaction from squishing things together, taking them apart, and making a mess just for the sake of it
- having fun splashing, giggling and tickling.

## Messy play about the coronavirus

During the current situation, your child might use messy play to:

- explore their feelings about germs, viruses and how these are passed from one place or person to another
- create models or images of what they think a virus looks like or how it acts, maybe giving it a personality.

If your child is doing this, you can help by:

- allowing them to play freely, so they can work things out in a way that helps them come to terms with what's happening
- using their play as a starting point for conversations about the virus and its effects.

## Tips for dealing with messy play at home

It can be harder to deal with mess around the house - or to wash and dry clothes - when you are having to stay at home so much. And children may worry about adding stress to the family, too.

The important thing is to try to find a balance that works for your family. Here are some suggestions:

- Let your child know you don't mind them getting wet or a bit messy when they play.
- Keep some old clothes that you're happy for your child to wear when they get messy.
- Involve your child when you're cleaning up and sorting out messy clothes and toys.
- Cover the floor or table with old cloths or newspaper.
- Discuss with your child where it's ok to be messy in your home and where it isn't.
- Remember that bathrooms are usually perfect for messy and wet play.











The *IPA play in crisis* series is designed to offer straightforward advice and suggestions to help you and your child keep playing through the coronavirus pandemic.



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