



Sensory Bin Starter Guide

Low-mess setup for toddlers 12-24 months · page 1 of 2

The two-towel setup (5 minutes)

- 1 Spread a big towel or shower curtain on the floor. This is your 'mess zone'.
- 2 Put a shallow, clear tub on the towel. Shallow beats deep: little arms reach the bottom and less gets flung out.
- 3 Fill the tub only 1-2 inches deep. Less filler = less mess and more scooping.
- 4 Add 3-4 tools: a scoop, a cup, a funnel, a muffin tin. Not more.
- 5 Keep a second towel folded beside you for hands and spills at the end.
- 6 Sit with your toddler the whole time. When the throwing starts, play is over: say 'all done' calmly and put the lid on.

Good starter tools

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|---|--|
| ☐ Shallow clear tub (about 28 quart) | ☐ Big plastic scoops and measuring cups |
| ☐ Funnel | ☐ Muffin tin or ice cube tray |
| ☐ Chunky toddler tongs | ☐ Big toy animals or cars |

Never put these in a toddler sensory bin

Water beads (they swell inside the body), small beads, buttons, coins, dried beans or rice for children who still mouth things, button batteries, magnets, and anything that fits inside a toilet paper tube. Even shallow water needs a grown-up within arm's reach.



Filler Safety Chart + 15 Bins to Try

Pick fillers by age · page 2 of 2

Filler	Taste-safe?	Best age	Notes
O-shaped oat cereal	Yes	12m+	Great first bin. Easy to sweep.
Cooked pasta (cooled)	Yes	12m+	Slippery and squishy. Use the same day.
Large dry pasta (rigatoni, penne)	No	18m+	Big shapes only. Watch for broken bits.
Water, 1/2 inch deep	Yes	12m+	Arm's reach supervision, always.
Large ice cubes	Yes	12m+	Big cubes only. Great for ice rescue.
Shredded paper / tissue	No	18m+	Low mess. Stop if they mouth it.
Large pom-poms (2 in+)	No	2y+	Only the big ones. Supervise.
Dry rice	No	3y+	Only once they stop mouthing.
Dried beans, small beads	No	Not for toddlers	Choking risk. Save for ages 3-5+.
Water beads	No	Never	Dangerous if swallowed. Do not use.

15 bins to try (tick them off)

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|--|---|---|
| ☐ Pasta Scoop & Dump | ☐ Pom-Pom Color Sort (2y+) | ☐ Cereal Scoop Bin |
| ☐ Half-Inch Ocean Bin | ☐ Sponge Squeeze Transfer | ☐ Ice Rescue Tray |
| ☐ Ribbon Pull Box | ☐ Felt Strip Drop | ☐ Colander Spaghetti Poke |
| ☐ Pipe Cleaner Colander | ☐ Penne Tower (2y+) | ☐ Gel Squish Bag (sealed, taped) |
| ☐ Paint Mixing Bag | ☐ Foil Surprise Bin | ☐ Tissue Paper Treasure Hunt |

Full setup steps for all 15 bins at [tinygigglers.com](https://www.tinygigglers.com) 15 Mess-Free Toddler Sensory Bins