

How to play and learn with water beads

I have read lots of other people's posts about water bead play, so I thought it was about time we tried. I bought some water beads off the internet, very cheap. I soaked them in bowls for a few hours and overnight, then they turned into slippery squishy marbles! Here's how we played with them.....



name recognition water bead fun



I gave my children a bowl of water beads each, with the letters of their name in it. I used magnetic letters from the fridge. I asked them to find the letters to spell out their name in the right order.

They were very excited, feeling through the slippery wet water beads, looking for the letters of their name. They picked out their letters and laid them on the table in the right order.

Next they wanted to swap bowls to see if they could spell out each others names. My 4 year olds needed a little help with this, but were really proud of their achievement once they had managed the

names



**Name
recognition
water bead fun**



Using water beads to help practice fine motor skills

I gave my children an ice-cube tray for them to fill with water beads. This meant they had to pick each water bead up carefully, one at a time to place in each cube of the tray. As the beads are quite

slippe



Water beads alphabet game



I put all the water beads in one big tub and placed it on the floor. I added lots of magnetic fridge letters into the tub and mixed them up.

The aim of the game is to collect the most letters. I called out a letter and the first person to recognise, find and pick up the letter amongst the water beads gets to keep it. The next letter is called, then when all the letters have been found, count up to see who has the most letters.

My children became very excited with this game, you can't beat a bit of a competition for increasing their learning sometimes. They all squealed with delight every time they found a letter! I was surprised how my 4-year-old girls managed to find so many letters correctly, I thought my 6-year-old would steal all the letters, but it was actually quite evenly matched!

This game was very much enjoyed and I thought it was fantastic as it involved lots of fun, sensory learning, alphabet learning, listening and competition (as you need to learn how to lose sometimes

as well



Water bead sensory fun

Water beads are fantastic for good sensory learning and fun. They are very different to feel and hold. The children tried to bury their hands. They loved feeling them, playing with them and swishing them about. They decided to take their socks off and stand in them, feel with their feet.

I asked them to describe what they felt like. It made them think about the texture, the feel, wet or dry, soft or hard, squishy, slippery or rough? They used their language to try to describe their

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Experimenting with water beads

Water beads lend themselves very well to basic science. The beads start off as tiny hard balls, then when you soak them for a few hours (or over night), they absorb the water and become big colourful slippery, squishy marbles and the surrounding water is gone. It is fascinating to watch and the children loved seeing them expand. Every time BB walked past the bowl he wanted to see and touch them.

Additionally, my children were generally very fascinated by these water beads, they kept squashing them to see them burst open to observe the gel like consistency inside. They also experimented by bouncing them on the floor. If you throw them gently they bounce around like a bouncy ball, but if you through them too hard, they just splat on the floor! Of course, children LOVE things that go SPLAT!!



**Experimenting
with
water beads**

Colour sorting water beads

Another good activity with water beads is colour sorting. Give children several bowls for them to, colour match into. This could take a while, but has potential to keep a toddler entertained for some time whilst learning their colours and practicing their fine motor skills.



I must admit, when I first got these water beads, I thought how on earth are we going to play with these? But I was very pleasantly surprised. I mixed in the letters etc, but all the other learning, fun and games, were initiated by my children, they instinctively know how to play, learn, explore and have fun.

I would recommend having a go with water beads as there is so much learning, experimentation, exploration, sensory play and fun to be had with them, without any mess!

How do you play with water beads?

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