



I'm a Dirty Dinosaur

By Janeen Brian, illustrated by Ann James

Many of these activities are for children in a preschool setting with learning centers, but they can easily be used at home as well.

Sponge-y Play

The dirty dinosaur ends up washing. So provide a variety of shapes, sizes, and colors of sponges in the water table. Children will explore floating, squeezing, and sorting the sponges.

Mud Finger Painting

Put 1 or 2 teaspoons of brown fingerpaint on a paper plate.

Variation 1: Use chocolate pudding instead of paint.

Variation 2: Finger paint directly on the table with no paper.

Dirt + Water = Mud

Place soil in a big plastic container or a sensory table. In addition to shovels and pails, add plastic spray bottles with water. Allow the children to help clean up.

Bathing Dinosaurs

In the Dramatic Play Center, provide containers with less than 1 inch of water, along with washcloths and towels, so the children can bathe the dinosaurs and other toy creatures.

Variation: If you don't want water in the center, provide damp washcloths and dry towels.

Muddy Play Dough

Make your own play dough with brown food coloring. To make brown, mix together red and yellow, then add just a tiny bit of blue or green. If it's still too orange, try adding a little more, but be careful because blue and green go a long way. If it gets too grayish or black, add more red and yellow. Play dough recipe:

1 c. flour, ½ c. salt, 2 t. cream of tartar, 2 T. vegetable oil, 1 c. water, food coloring

1. Combine flour, salt, and cream of tartar and mix well.
2. Add food coloring to the water and oil, and combine with dry ingredients.
3. Stir over medium heat several minutes until it forms a ball.
4. Let cool in a bowl.
5. Knead until smooth.
6. Store in an airtight container. Should keep for several weeks.

Clean Mud

Makes this soft, lotion-y substance, safe to rub on hands and arms, for sensory play. (Do not dispose of this in a sink or toilet as it will cause a clog.)

Recipe for mud:

Four rolls toilet paper, 1 gallon warm water, 3 bars Ivory soap (shaved beforehand using a cheese grater)

1. Let the children help tear the toilet paper into pieces.



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2. Combine all ingredients in a plastic dishpan or large bucket.
 3. Knead by hand until soft and pliable, adding more water as necessary.

Move Like a Dirty Dinosaur

Play a game similar to Musical Chairs, but with some variation. Place chairs as you would for Musical Chairs, but there is a chair for everyone. This is a movement game, so no chairs will be removed. As you play music, everyone marches around the chairs as you call out the movement. (See list.) Stop the music, and everyone scrambles for a chair. Then restart the music, calling out the second movement. Continue through the list. If the children still want to play after completing the final movement on the list, ask them what else they think dirty dinosaurs might do, then repeat, calling out that movement.

1. Sniff and snuff about.
2. Shake about the place.
3. Tap it like a drum.
4. Stamp about the street.
5. Slide it like a snail.
6. Give myself a wash.

Tap It Like a Drum

Choose one or more of these activities.

- Have a parade! Give each child a rhythm instrument such as drums, bells, rhythm sticks, triangles, tambourines, wood blocks, etc. Play lively music as everyone marches in the parade.
- March around the room while a fast song is playing, clapping hands to the beat. Play just part of the fast song, then choose another song with a different tempo. Keep clapping and changing songs and tempos until their energy gives out.
- Sit in a circle on the floor with the children. Say a child's name and then tap the floor for each syllable, for example: Ma-kay-la = 3 taps. Have each child say their name, then everyone repeats it as they tap the floor once per syllable.
- Provide sturdy, age-appropriate drums (and other rhythm instruments) for the children to experiment with on their own.
- Invite a drummer to visit.

The Letter D in Dirty Dinosaur

Building phonemic awareness is an important part of learning to read.

- Say "dirty dinosaur" together. Ask the children what sound they hear at the beginning of those words. Show the letter D to the group. Ask if anyone's name starts with the sound of the letter D. Then ask if they see anything in the room that starts with that sound. Put several items in front of the children, then let each child choose one, say what it is, and tell if it does or does not start with the sound of the letter D.
- Continue to talk about the letter D and its sound informally throughout the next few days. Examples: "I see that Josh is playing with the dominoes. 'Dominoes' starts with the sound of the letter D." "Now we're going to get up and dance. Dance. What



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sound does that word start with? And what letter makes that sound?" "It's time to go inside. Let's go to the door. Door. What sound do you hear at the beginning of door?" "I see that Annie has a letter D on her shirt today."

The Dirty Dinosaur Song

After several readings, the children will become familiar with the book. Once that happens, try singing this song to the tune of "The Itsy-Bitsy Spider." (The lyrics are almost the same as the text of the book, with one change: at the end of each verse, the first line is repeated. Also, you have to get a little creative in a couple spots to fit the syllables in with the tune. Start the first word on the downbeat, the first beat of the measure. You can figure it out!) Hold up the book while singing, just as you do when reading it aloud. Lead the children in acting out the 3rd line of each verse.

1. *I'm a dirty dinosaur with a dirty snout.
I never wipe it clean, I just sniff and snuff about.
Sniff, sniff, snuff, snuff, sniff and snuff about!
I'm a dirty dinosaur with a dirty snout.*
2. *I'm a dirty dinosaur with a dirty face.
I never have a wash, I just shake about the place.
Shake, shake, shake, shake, shake about the place!
I'm a dirty dinosaur with a dirty face.*
3. *I'm a dirty dinosaur with a dirty tum.
I splatter it with mud, and I tap it like a drum.
Tap, tap, tap, tap, tap it like a drum!
I'm a dirty dinosaur with a dirty tum.*
4. *I'm a dirty dinosaur with dirty, dirty feet.
I splash in all the puddles, and I stamp about the street.
Stamp, stamp, stamp, stamp, stamp about the street!
I'm a dirty dinosaur with dirty, dirty feet.*
5. *I'm a dirty dinosaur with a dirty tail.
I flick it in the muck, or I slide it like a snail.
Slide, slide, slide, slide, slide it like a snail!
I'm a dirty dinosaur with a dirty tail.*
6. *I'm a dirty dinosaur. I'm YUCKY! Oh, my gosh.
I think I'll stomp right to the swamp and give myself a wash.
Wash, wash, wash, wash, give myself a wash!*

The book ends here, without a last line for this verse of the song. Ask the children what they think we should do about that. If they provide a last line, sing it. If they think the song should end here, that's okay. Or if they have any other ideas, use them. If you sing this many times throughout the year, you can do something different each time.