

Tickling the Senses



“Sensory Play is all about providing safe and fun activities that stimulate a child’s senses and allows them to explore and experience the world around them.” by Meraki Mother

When children use their senses to discover and learn they are building neuronal pathways in their brain and strengthening already established pathways essential to brain development. The five main senses include touch, smell, sight, taste, and sound, as well as the two not-as-frequently-mentioned senses: vestibular (a sense of balance) and proprioceptive (a sense of where each body part is in space).

When infants, toddlers and preschoolers engage in sensory play they are learning cause and effect, scientific reasoning, mathematical reasoning, problem-solving, creativity, social skills and, most importantly, how to self-regulate and control their feelings and behaviors. When children experience loose parts and natural materials that stimulate their senses, they tend to exude a calmness as they focus and engage.

Sensory experiences can include sensory tubs filled with soapy water, sand, acorns and pinecones, snow, dirt, bark, fall leaves, or pine needles. Playdough, bubbles, ice cubes, and, process art, such as finger painting, using glue that is sticky, and tearing paper. Exploring bubble wrap, using eye droppers, discovering sound with pots and pans, using flashlights to notice light and shadow, smelling spices from the kitchen, tasting sweet and sour, moving like animals are other activities that adults can offer children to tickle their senses.

When children are encouraged and offered opportunities to use their senses, they will find joy in the process of learning.

Sensory for Babies

For babies still putting things in their mouths, sensory bags or bottles allow for exploration without the risk of getting into their mouth. Use empty and clean water bottles, or gallon size zip-lock bags. You can hot glue or tape the bottles shut, and use masking tape to help keep the seal tight on the bags. These are great for non-mobile babies as a “tummy-time” activity, or for mobile infants and toddlers at a table or anywhere. **Bags, if chewed on could break. You can double up on these if needed.



Baby and Toddler



Discovery Bottles!



TUMMY TIME
SENSORY BAGS



 **CanDo Kiddo**

Interesting Stuff to Put into Sensory Bottles or Bags...

Super cheap colored hair gel (mmm, smells nice doesn't it?!)
Water

Baby oil

Sand

Flour

Sugar

Shaving Cream

Play-dough

Paint

Dry popcorn kernels

Cotton balls

Shredded Paper

Jell-o

Dried Leaves, cut flowers or other materials from the great outdoors

Ice

Thingamajigs to Add or Use Alone....

Buttons

Glitter

Marbles or other balls too small to give your kiddo

Googly Eyes (for craft projects)

Beads

Water beads or Tapioca beads

Fake flowers or leaves

Seashells

Craft pompoms

Little foam shapes

http://www.candokiddo.com/news/2014/10/1/sensory-bags-for-itty-bitty-babies?utm_source=pinterest&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=traffic



Mirror Time

Starting around 6 months, baby begins to recognize herself in the mirror and can begin to learn more about what she can do. Baby is also beginning to put language and vocabulary together. And a mirror is crucial to this process. Simply put: mirror time matters.

<https://simplehomeblessings.com/baby-better-mirror-time-matters/>

Make funny faces

Sing a Song

Stick out your tongue

Play peek-a-boo

Play dress up

Get the family in on the fun

Rat-a-Tat-Tat

Gather some metal pots, pans, baking tins, and a wooden spoon or other item to use as a “striker.” Children can use their hands or the striker to make “music.” What are they learning?

Cause and effect (how an action creates a result)

Large motor skills (motions from the shoulder or elbow to bang the pots)

Small motor skills (need the large motor skills to help build the small, and the small are the precursor to writing)

Different things make different sounds

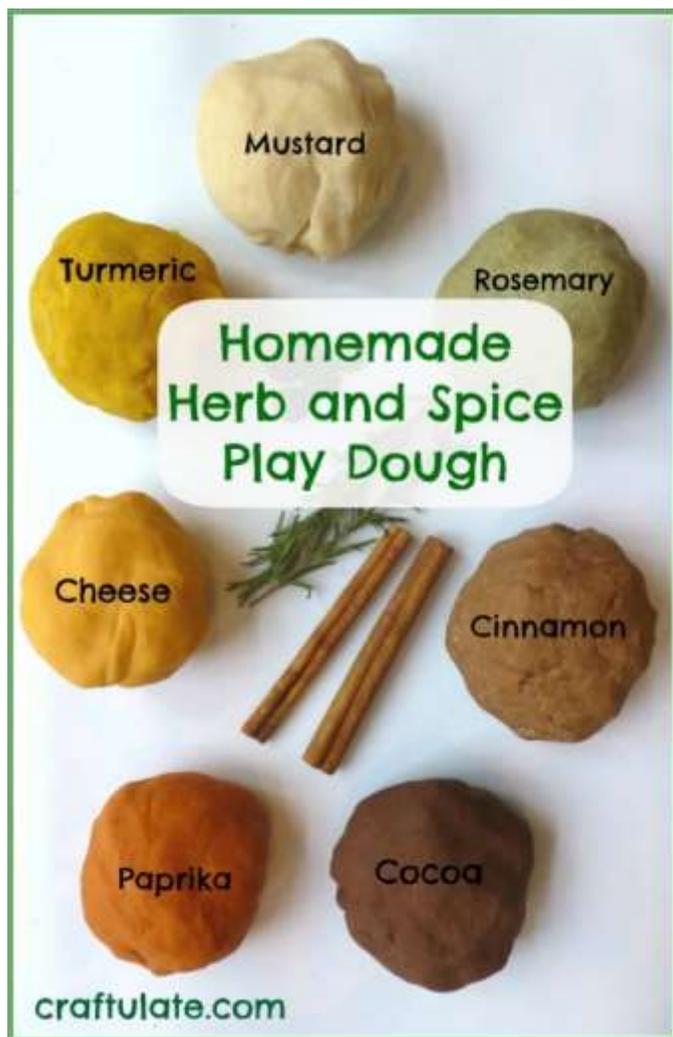
Expressing emotions - Enjoyment and excitement

Sensory – the feel of the metal, and wood

Beats and rhythm

<https://www.learnwithplayathome.com/2012/07/baby-play-rat-tat-tins.html>





Ground Rosemary – 2 tbs

This gave the dough a soft green colour and a wonderful woody smell.

Mild Mustard Powder – 1-2 tbs

The mustard powder mixed in really well, giving a subtle light yellow colour.

Ground Cinnamon – 1 tbs

The cinnamon produced a lovely milky chocolate-colored dough - and the wonderful warm spicy smell

Ground Turmeric – 1.5 tsp

The turmeric gave the dough an amazing bright yellow color and a lovely spicy aroma.

Cocoa Powder – 1-2 tbs

Plain play dough plus cocoa powder equals *Chocolate Play Dough*

Paprika – 1 tsp

It gave such a warm red color to the dough as well.

Cheddar Cheese Powder – 1 tbs

This produced a lovely light orange dough.

Some Spices you might use....

- Californian Paprika
- Dutched Cocoa Powder
- Ground Turmeric Root
- Mild Mustard Powder
- Ground Rosemary
- Cheddar Cheese Powder
- Ground Cinnamon

Ingredients for the basic dough:

- ½ cup flour
- ½ cup water
- 2 tbs salt
- 1 tsp cream of tartar
- Herbs and spices (see above)

Instructions:

- For each batch of play dough, add all ingredients to a saucepan and mix well. See main post for suggested quantities of herbs and spices.
- Place over a low-medium heat and cook, stirring constantly, until the dough forms into a ball.
- Place onto wax paper, let cool, then knead until smooth.

Make a batch as above for each powder. See suggested quantities of how much of each herb and spice to add (to the left).

<https://craftulate.com/homemade-herb-and-spice-play-dough/>



Flour + Baby Oil = Cloud Dough



Just mix baby oil and flour in a 1:8 ratio-- we used 1/4 cup baby oil and 2 cups flour--and you have cloud dough! It looks like flour, but it holds its shape when pressed.

Rainbow Sidewalk Chalk Paint & Erupting Paint



Make a simple sidewalk paint using water, cornstarch, baking soda and color that washes away. Can be used in squirt bottles, or cupcake tins with a paintbrush.

<http://www.learnplayimagine.com/2014/02/rainbow-sidewalk-chalk-paint-recipe.html>

Supplies:

- cornstarch
- baking soda
- water
- liquid watercolor paint or food coloring
- squeeze bottles
- vinegar
- squirt bottles (clean mustard bottle) & spray bottles

Directions: Making sidewalk chalk paint is incredibly simple. The traditional recipe calls for equal amounts of water and cornstarch with added color. To make erupting sidewalk chalk paint I mixed 1/3 cup of water, 1/3 cup of cornstarch, and 1/3 cup of baking soda with each color. Remember that the base of this paint recipe is white, so add a good amount of color to achieve vibrant shades of paint (or sparingly if concerned about staining). For easy preparation mix the ingredients in a measuring cup with an easy pour spout to make filling the squeeze bottles an easy task.

Put vinegar into spray bottles and spray onto sidewalk where chalkpaint is.



Salt Dough Fossils



Materials List

1. flour (2 cups)
2. salt (1 cup)
3. water (1 cup)
4. plastic dinosaurs (or leaves, twigs, shells, etc)
5. food coloring - red, yellow, and blue
6. mixing bowl - large
7. cutting board
8. rolling pin
9. cookie cutter - circle
10. oven - optional

Process:

Mix 2 cups of flour and 1 cup of salt together in the mixing bowl.

Gradually add 1 cup of water, stirring as you go, until you have a dough-like consistency. We added several drops of red, yellow, and blue food coloring to make a greenish water that turns the dough brown. **Tip: Don't make the dough too wet! You may not need a whole cup of water.**

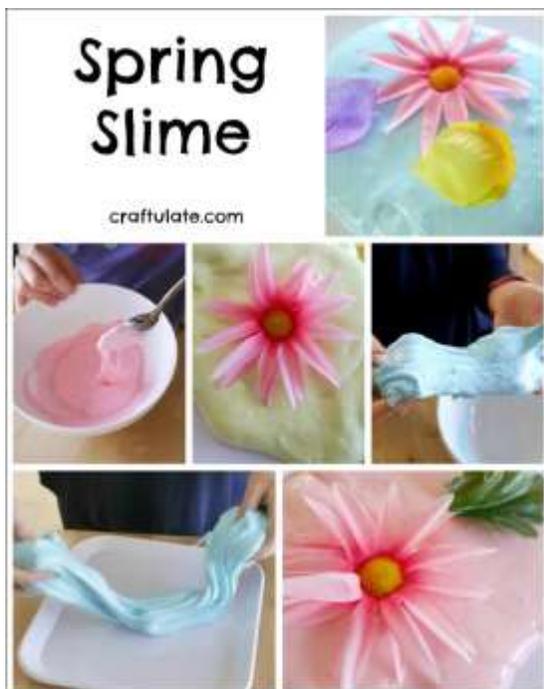
Form the dough into a ball, dust it with flour, and knead it for at least 5 minutes. **Tip: the longer you knead your dough, the smoother it will be. If your dough gets too sticky, add more flour to the dough, your hands, or your kneading surface.**

Roll your dough out to about ½-inch to ¼-inch thickness.

Cut circles out of the dough using either a cookie cutter or a glass.

Press your dinosaurs into the dough. (You can use leaves, twigs, shells, or other small objects). Then, carefully remove them. Either let your dinosaur fossils air dry, or bake them in the oven at 200 degrees for 2-3 hours.

<https://www.kiwico.com/diy/Science-Projects-for-Kids/3/project/Salt-Dough-Dinosaur-Fossils/543>



<https://craftulate.com/spring-slime/>

Ingredients:

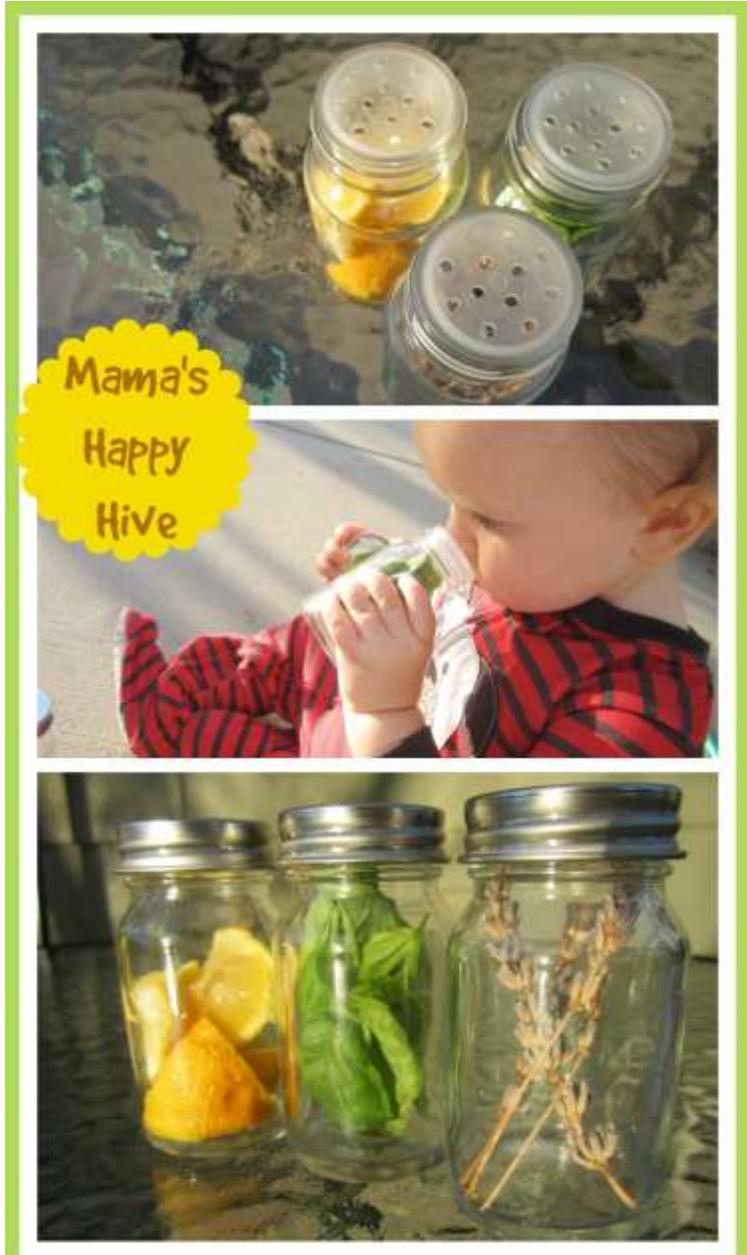
- 1 regular size bottle of White Glue
- Liquid Starch (not always easy to find, but look where laundry supplies are found at your grocery store)
- Food Coloring (a few drops)

Directions:

Pour white glue into mixing bowl. Add a few drops of food coloring. Slowly add starch to glue and food coloring in mixing bowl until the mixture becomes less liquid and sticky, but more squishy and congealed.

Use slime on a tray if you have one. Children can add any small objects (plastic flowers, plastic animals), use potato masher on slime, or small scissors for older children.

Enjoy!



Sniffing Scent Jars

Discover the sense of smell with this fun activity from Mama's Happy Hive

https://www.mamashappyhive.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Montessori-Inspired-Scent-Jars-www.mamashappyhive.com_.jpg.jpg

It's important to help your child develop all of their five senses of taste, sight, touch, hearing, and smell. The scent jars help to develop the sense of smell, which facilitates memory learning. It's a scientific fact that the brain connects smells to memories! So, enjoy making several scent jars with your little one and blossom fun memories that will last a lifetime. 😊



Pick and place fresh herbs, fruit and other items with distinct smells into jars with holes in the top. Let children smell and discover and create memories.

Scented Seashell Alphabet Search Sensory Bin



<https://thekindergartenconnection.com/scented-seashell-alphabet-search-sensory-bin/>

This is such a fun sensory bin to add to your sensory table as summer draws nearer and conversations start turning towards fun summer plans. While some families may have elaborate or unique plans, nearly all of the children can relate to either splash pad or beach visits, so it's a great go-to sensory bin that can be offered year after year.

I found collections of seashells at our local dollar store, along with those blue glass beads, but you can also print out clip art of seashells, write the letters on the back of the paper, and laminate instead if you don't have access to cheaper seashells.



How to Make a Scented Seashell Sensory Bin

First, gather your materials:

- 5lb bag of dry rice or other sensory bin filler
- Blue food dye OR 2 Packages tropical punch Kool-Aid
- 3-4 Tablespoons coconut flavor extract
- 2 bags [glass marbles or sea glass](#)
- 26-50 seashells
- Sharpie permanent marker
- Beach digging tools



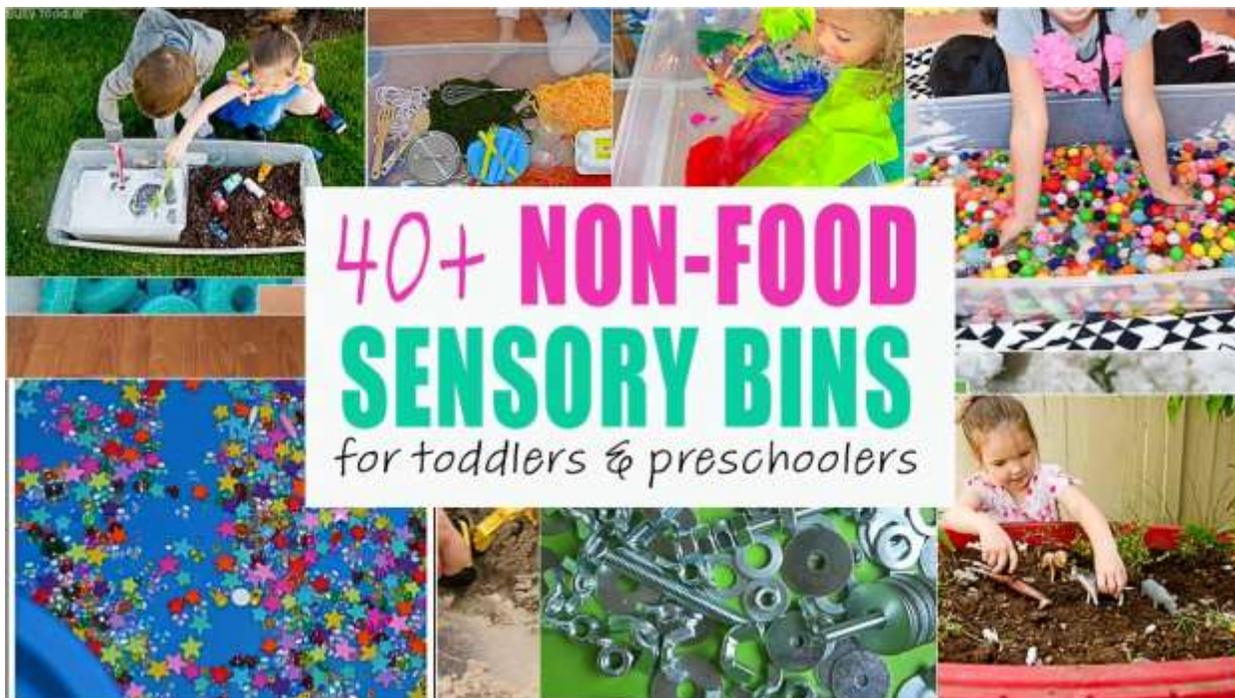
To make your tropical scented rice, start by placing half of your rice in a large glass or metal bowl.

Mix your flavor extract and Kool-aid OR blue food dye in a glass cup until you reach a deep blue saturation.

Add a couple Tablespoons of the blue liquid to your rice and stir well. Add in extra food dye as needed.

Pour the rice out of the bowl and onto a baking tray or large storage bin. Smooth it down to a flat, even layer.

Repeat with the remaining rice and let it dry for at least 2 hours.



<https://happytoddlerplaytime.com/non-food-sensory-bins-toddlers-preschoolers/>



<https://pocketofpreschool.com/sensory-table>

Notes	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	 milk	 bye	 ball	1 Make silly faces in front of a mirror	2 Practice the sign for "milk" during meals	3 Notice to see if your child turns towards sounds	4 Play peek-a-boo
	5 Practice clapping and saying "yay!" with your child	6 See if your child will turn toward you when you say their name	7 Have your child reach up to you to be picked up	8 Copy the sounds your child makes	9 Build a tower and have your child knock it down	10 Teach following directions, "Come here"	11 Read an animal book with your child
	12 Look for hidden eggs hidden under a blanket	13 Sing The Wheels on the Bus	14 Play outside in the grass with shoes off	15 Do something to make your child laugh	16 Read a book with poems to your child	17 Blow bubbles and watch to see where they land	18 Play with cars and make car noises together
	19 Give 5 people a high five today	20 Pet an animal that is soft	21 Practice learning body parts by tickling your child's "toes"	22 Wash a container from the recycling and put things in it	23 Sing Row, Your Boat	24 Will your child follow the direction "Give me a hug?"	25 Make an obstacle course in your living room
	26 Pass a ball back and forth	27 Point to pictures in a book and say what they are	28 Use the sign "eat" during meals today	29 Play dress-up	30 Copy the sounds your child makes		

Why Cooking?



Cooking provides the opportunity to strengthen the home-school connection in an authentic way. Traditions, celebrations and culture can be shared through food.

Cooking provides a hands on way to introduce mathematical concepts to children. These include estimating, measuring, counting and sequencing.

Cooking provides the opportunity to develop oral language skills when new vocabulary is learned and applied.

Cooking allows the children to make new connections with each other and build relationships in a different context.

Cooking develops motor skills. Chopping, mixing, kneading and stirring improves motor skills and coordination.

Cooking develops self esteem. Being able to serve food to friends and family that they have prepared is a powerful experience.

Cooking is fun! Kindergarten is a special year. We think that cooking experiences will make happy memories for the children to look back on.



Apple and Cheese Quesadillas

Ingredients:

- 2 medium tortillas
- ½ cup of shredded cheese
- ½ apple sliced thin
- 1 tsp olive oil

Build the quesadillas on a side plate by adding ¼ apple and ¼ cup cheese then fold in half...do with both tortillas. In a shallow pan dribble olive oil, warm pan to med/low and add quesadillas apple side down until tortilla is a bit golden, flip over and when done, put on a plate, slice and ENJOY!



[This Photo by Melissa A. PhotoBlogger.com is licensed under CC BY.](#)

Homemade Meatballs

Ingredients:

- 1 lb ground meat
- 1 medium carrot shredded
- 1 egg
- ½ cup bread crumbs
- Salt, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder to taste

Mix all of this in a bowl by hand until well incorporated, cover and place in refrigerator for 30 minutes for all the flavors to join together.

Make 16-18 small meatballs.

You can bake them on 350* for 25-30 min or you can cook them on the stove top in a bit of olive oil until done.

These are wonderful on sandwiches, in soup, with pasta or in tortillas. ENJOY!

Do you have a curious toddler?



As your child grows, think about **water safety** around the house!

infant



crawler



toddler



child



teen



Young children are naturally curious – and they are quick to discover new things to explore.

After birth defects, drowning is the **No. 1** cause of death for children ages 1-4. Make sure your home and any home you visit are as safe as they can be.



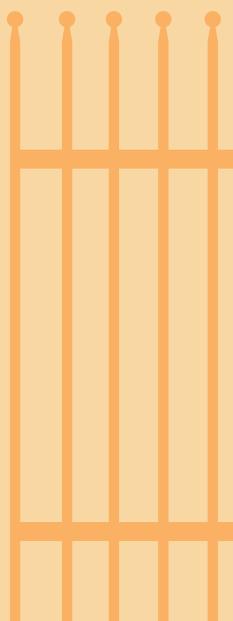
Stay within **arm's reach** whenever your child is near water.

Assign a **water watcher** – an adult who will pay constant attention to children in the water.

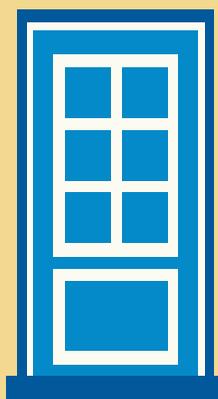


Have a pool? Be sure it's **surrounded on all sides by a fence** that is

- At least 4 feet high
- Non-climbable
- Has a self-latching, self-closing gate



Empty **buckets, bathtubs, and wading pools** after each use.



Use safety gates, or **lock the door to the yard or garage**, to keep your child from going outside unnoticed.

Avoid 'floaties.' Instead, children should wear **Coast Guard-approved life jackets** when in and around water.



All kids should **learn how to swim**. Talk with your pediatrician about whether your child is ready.



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STRESS

The **Ball** Is in Your **Court**

Stress can be related to the amount of control you feel over a situation, event, interaction, thought or feeling. Since we can't change things that are out of our control, it's best to focus on what is in our control.

Examples of areas outside of your control:

- How people respond to you.
- Other people's feelings.

Focusing on areas outside of your control results in:

- Feeling hopeless.
- Feeling anxious.
- Feeling STRESSED.

Examples of what is in your control:

- Your ability to prioritize work requirements and personal obligations.
- Your reactions to events and other people.
- Your thoughts.
- Your behavior.

Focusing on areas in your control results in:

- Feeling empowered.
- Feeling relief.



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