

# The Gingerbread Explorers: A 5-Day Sensory & Motor Adventure (Ages 2)

## Materials Needed

- Books: Simple, large-format board book featuring The Gingerbread Man (or similar theme).
- Sensory Materials: Dried oats, rice, or dried beans; Cinnamon and ginger spice; Small scoops and cups.
- Craft Supplies: Large paper cutouts of gingerbread people (pre-cut for ease); Large pom-poms, buttons, or large stickers; Non-toxic glue sticks and liquid glue.
- Motor/Creative Play: Playdough (or edible version like peanut butter dough or flour/salt dough); Large gingerbread cookie cutters; Rolling pins (small toy ones work best); Large markers or toddler crayons.
- Movement: Simple instrumental music for movement.
- Optional: One simple gingerbread cookie for tasting (check for allergies).

### Day 1: Smells and Textures (Sensory Focus)

#### Learning Objective

The learner will engage with at least two new scents (cinnamon, ginger) and describe the texture of the sensory bin materials (e.g., 'soft,' 'rough').

#### I. Introduction (5 minutes)

**Hook:** "Look at this jar! What big smell is this? Sniff, sniff! It smells warm and sweet!" (Introduce a small jar of cinnamon or pumpkin pie spice.)

**Objective in Plain Language:** Today, we are going to use our noses and our hands to learn about gingerbread!

#### II. Body: Sensory Exploration (45 minutes)

##### I Do (Modeling - 5 minutes)

- **Content:** Introduce the sensory bin (oats/rice mixed lightly with cinnamon and ginger).
- **Modeling:** "I scoop the rice. Scoop, scoop, scoop. Now I pour it. Listen to the sound!" Demonstrate how to use the scoops and run fingers through the material.
- **Key Vocabulary:** Smell, Sweet, Scoop, Pour.

##### We Do (Guided Practice - 20 minutes)

- **Activity: Hidden Buttons.** Hide large buttons or pom-poms (the 'gingerbread man buttons') in the bin.
- **Interaction:** Encourage the learner to find the buttons using their hands. "Can you find a button? Dig, dig, dig!"
- **Formative Assessment:** Ask the learner to repeat the names of the scents or describe the feeling. (e.g., "Is it rough or smooth?")

### You Do (Independent Practice & Choice - 20 minutes)

- **Activity: Transferring Play.** Provide multiple small cups and containers. Allow the learner to independently scoop and transfer the sensory materials.
- **Differentiation:** For learners needing scaffolding, use only large spoons and large bowls. For advanced learners, introduce fine motor tools like tongs or tweezers (if developmentally appropriate) to move the 'buttons'.

### III. Conclusion (10 minutes)

**Closure:** Cleanup time accompanied by a simple "Clean Up" song. Recap: "We scooped, we poured, and we smelled the sweet cinnamon! Good job, hands!"

## Day 2: Making the Gingerbread Face (Fine Motor Focus)

### Learning Objective

The learner will practice a fine motor skill (sticking/gluing) by decorating a paper gingerbread cutout, identifying two body parts (eyes, buttons).

### I. Introduction (5 minutes)

**Hook:** Show a picture or stuffed animal of a simple gingerbread person. "Look at this gingerbread friend! Where are his eyes? Where is his tummy?"

**Objective in Plain Language:** We will make our own gingerbread friend today using glue and colorful dots!

### II. Body: Decorating & Sticking (45 minutes)

#### I Do (Modeling - 5 minutes)

- **Content:** Demonstrate how to use the glue stick or how to dip a finger/cotton swab into liquid glue (if using).
- **Modeling:** Show the learner a paper gingerbread cutout. "I put glue on the tummy. Sticky, sticky, sticky. Now I put a button right here! Push, push, push."
- **Key Vocabulary:** Glue, Sticky, Eye, Button, Push.

#### We Do (Guided Practice - 20 minutes)

- **Activity: Simple Sticking.** Guide the learner to stick large pom-poms, buttons, or large stickers onto their pre-cut gingerbread shape.
- **Interaction:** Focus on successful placement, not precision. Ask: "Where should the eyes go? Two eyes, one, two!"
- **Success Criteria:** The learner successfully sticks at least 4 items onto the paper cutout.

#### You Do (Independent Practice & Choice - 20 minutes)

- **Activity: Color Selection.** Offer a choice of two colors of materials (e.g., red and green pom-poms) and let them choose which one they want to use next.

- **Real-World Relevance:** Practicing this fine motor skill helps prepare the hands for holding crayons and spoons.

### III. Conclusion (10 minutes)

**Closure:** Display the finished gingerbread friend. Sing a simple song about body parts (e.g., Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes, pointing to the spots on the paper friend). "We made beautiful eyes and buttons today!"

## Day 3: Run, Run, As Fast As You Can! (Gross Motor Focus)

### Learning Objective

The learner will practice gross motor skills (running, stopping, following simple directions) for 10 consecutive minutes.

### I. Introduction (5 minutes)

**Hook:** Read or verbally tell the simplest version of the Gingerbread Man story, focusing on the running/chasing part. Use exaggerated voices and movements. "The gingerbread man runs! Run, run, run!"

**Objective in Plain Language:** Today we are going to run and move our big muscles like the fast gingerbread man!

### II. Body: Movement and Mimicry (45 minutes)

#### I Do (Modeling - 10 minutes)

- **Content:** Introduce movement words.
- **Modeling:** Demonstrate simple movements: running in place, stomping like the fox, jumping like the gingerbread man. "Run, run, run! Stop!" (Practice Stop and Go).
- **Key Vocabulary:** Run, Stop, Fast, Slow, Jump.

#### We Do (Guided Practice - 20 minutes)

- **Activity: The Chase Game.** One adult/teacher is the 'Fox' (or Grandma). The learner is the 'Gingerbread Man'. The adult chases the toddler in a safe, designated area, encouraging them to run quickly and safely.
- **Adaptability:** In a classroom, divide into small groups with specific running zones. In a training context, this demonstrates incorporating movement breaks.
- **Formative Assessment:** Observe if the learner can successfully follow the "Stop!" command and the "Run!" command.

#### You Do (Independent Practice & Choice - 15 minutes)

- **Activity: Music and Movement.** Play simple, upbeat music. Let the learner choose how they want to move (dancing, spinning, crawling).
- **Differentiation:** For limited mobility, focus on marching, clapping, and arm movements

while sitting.

### III. Conclusion (10 minutes)

**Closure:** Cool-down and deep breathing. "Phew! We ran so fast! Our legs are tired. Let's take a deep breath in and blow the breath out like we are cooling a cookie."

## Day 4: Baking with Dough (Creative & Sensory Play)

### Learning Objective

The learner will manipulate playdough/edible dough using simple tools (rolling pin, cookie cutter) for at least 15 minutes.

### I. Introduction (5 minutes)

**Hook:** Bring out the playdough (ideally brown or scented with cocoa/cinnamon). Let them smell and touch it. "Wow, this dough feels squishy! Can you push it?"

**Objective in Plain Language:** Today we are 'baking' our own gingerbread cookies using playdough and cookie cutters!

### II. Body: Dough Manipulation (45 minutes)

#### I Do (Modeling - 10 minutes)

- **Content:** Demonstrate how to flatten the dough and use the cookie cutter.
- **Modeling:** "I push the dough flat, flat, flat. Now, I push the gingerbread cutter hard! Lift it up! Look, a cookie!"
- **Key Vocabulary:** Dough, Roll, Push, Cut, Flat.

#### We Do (Guided Practice - 20 minutes)

- **Activity: Cutter Practice.** Provide the learner with playdough and a large gingerbread cookie cutter. Guide their hands to push down hard enough to make the shape.
- **Interaction:** Offer small, loose parts (dry beans, buttons, pasta) to 'decorate' the dough cookies. Focus on the actions (patting, pushing, placing).
- **Formative Assessment:** Can the learner successfully mimic the rolling or flattening motion after the demonstration?

#### You Do (Independent Practice & Choice - 15 minutes)

- **Activity: Open Exploration.** Let the learner explore the dough freely—pounding, squeezing, tearing. Provide small containers or 'baking trays' (lids) for them to place their creations.
- **Differentiation:** For learners who resist messy hands, provide tools (spoons, forks) to touch the dough, or use a zipper bag for tactile sensory input without direct contact.

### III. Conclusion (10 minutes)

**Closure:** Sing a song about baking. Collect the tools and put the dough away. Recap: "We made so many flat and yummy cookies today! You are a super baker!"

## Day 5: Story and Celebration (Recap and Consolidation)

### Learning Objective

The learner will participate in a review activity (coloring/painting) and recall a favorite activity from the week.

### I. Introduction (5 minutes)

**Hook:** Gather all the finished crafts and talk about the sensory bin and the dough. "Look at all the gingerbread fun we had this week! Which thing did you like best: the sticky glue or the squishy dough?"

**Objective in Plain Language:** We will look back at everything we learned about the gingerbread man and make one last colorful picture!

### II. Body: Review and Application (45 minutes)

#### I Do (Modeling - 5 minutes)

- **Content:** Introduce the final creative activity (coloring or finger painting).
- **Modeling:** Show a blank gingerbread outline. "I use my big crayon to color the legs brown. Color, color, color."
- **Key Vocabulary:** Color, All done, Fun, Favorite.

#### We Do (Guided Practice - 20 minutes)

- **Activity: Gingerbread Masterpiece.** Provide a large outline of a gingerbread person. Allow the learner to use large crayons, washable paint, or dot markers to decorate their final creation.
- **Interaction:** Encourage creativity and review learned concepts: "Can you make buttons on this one, too? What color is this?"

#### You Do (Independent Practice & Choice - 20 minutes)

- **Activity: Simple Tasting/Snack (Summative Assessment).** If approved, offer a small piece of a plain gingerbread cookie. Ask the learner, "Is it crunchy? Is it sweet?" (Focus on sensory descriptors).
- **Summative Assessment (Observation):** Can the learner successfully name or point to 2 of the gingerbread parts they focused on this week (eyes, buttons, legs)? Can they mimic rolling dough?

### **III. Conclusion (10 minutes)**

**Closure:** Share the final craft and congratulate the learner on a great week of learning. "Our gingerbread explorer week is all finished! You used your nose, your hands, and your fast legs! Hip hip hooray!"