

My Body My Senses

MESS® Recommended Materials



Basic Equipment

- handheld magnifying lenses
- feely bags or boxes
- skeleton model

Additional equipment

- air popcorn popper
- smell canisters (opaque containers with permeable covers)
- sound canisters (opaque containers with covers)
- organ or anatomy apron
- “peephole” book
- shallow pan
- rubber resistance band

Posters, illustrations, and photos

- poster with labels of the basic parts of the human body
- photos of basic parts of the body
- photo of a cat’s paw
- photo of a child’s hand
- illustrations or photos of fingerprints

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- pictures of items in smelling canisters
- photos of items in the sound canisters
- x-rays of a hand and foot
- photos or pictures of living and non-living things
- photos of a single person as a baby, child, adolescent and adult
- photos of each child in the class and a baby photo of each
- photos of people in different stages of life

Objects to explore

- small objects to magnify such as pennies, feathers, stamps, or dead insects
- sock or thumbless mitten
- objects difficult to grasp without using the thumb such as tennis ball, pencil or crayon, scissors, and bottle cap
- objects or materials with different textures
- opaque bag or box for concealing small objects to explore by touch
- variety of objects to explore by touch
- objects that make distinctive sounds when shaken such as bells, rolled-up socks, blocks, and balls

Supplies

- un-popped popcorn kernels
- a cup, bowls, plates, and napkins
- lead pencil
- paper
- transparent tape
- sand
- “smelly” items for smell canisters such as ripe banana, citrus peel, cloves, cinnamon stick, garlic, extracts and pine needles
- assortment of foods for tasting such as dill pickles, pretzels, cheese and various fruits

Books

Adoff, Arnold. *Touch the Poem*. New York: Blue Sky Press, 2000. Most readers will not have thought how various objects and movements feel, but these poems will make even young children more conscious of touching things—like peach fuzz or hair floating in the water. The full-page photographs provide visual support.

Aliki. *My Five Senses/Mis cinco sentidos*. New York: HarperTrophy, 1989. The five senses are introduced through simple text and illustrations of a little boy. Multiple examples of how he uses his senses will stimulate children to talk about their own sensory experiences.

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Aliki. *My Feet*. New York: HarperCollins, 1990. Other than the very early intrigue over playing with one's toes, most people—young and old—tend to take their feet for granted. This book details some basic parts and highlights the usefulness of feet. Drawings encourage observation and text inspires imitation.

Aliki. *My Hands*. New York: HarperCollins, 1990. Everyday we use our hands again and again—drawing, tickling, making snowballs, clapping, etc. Basic anatomy is little changed from an earlier edition, but drawings are diverse and colorful, supporting age-appropriate text. Topics like disabilities and left-handedness and detailed illustrations should provide good observation and conversation opportunities. NSTA Outstanding Trade Book

Andrews, Sylvia. *Dancing In My Bones*. New York: Harper Festival, 2001. More than bones move in this book! Multiple body parts get attention in rhymes that invite singing as well as movement. The final verse on “dancing in my heart” may need some discussion.

Appelt, Kathi. *Incredible Me!* New York: HarperCollins, 2003. An exuberant and self-confident little girl celebrates her uniqueness, including basic body parts. Colorful illustrations reveal her enthusiasm, too.

Barner, Bob. *Bug Safari*. New York: Holiday House, 2006. A little boy, with magnifying glass in hand, has an adventurous trip following ants on their way to a backyard picnic. Information is accurate; bold, enlarged pictures add to the mystery. Additional information about the animals encountered is included.

Beaumont, Karen. *I Like Myself!* New York: Harcourt, 2004. While the science is sometimes subtle, the simple, enthusiastic, rhyming text and amusing cartoons inspire discussion about self-esteem and how others view you.

Bennett, Jill, ed. *Tasty Poems*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992. Fun cartoon illustrations accompany short poems about some common foods—but usually with a different perspective. “I Like Cabbage,” “Chocolate Milk,” and “Taste of Purple,” especially, lend themselves to some classroom “testing” and enthusiastic conversation.

Berger, Melvin. *See, Hear, Touch, Taste, Smell*. Northborough, MA: Newbridge, 1994. Beautiful large photographs introduce the five senses and what each does. With one sentence per page, the text introduces some words connected to each sense (e.g., smell, nose, odor). The idea of using multiple senses at once is also presented. Ideas to think about are added.

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Brown, Margaret Wise. *The Indoor Noisy Book*. New York: HarperCollins, 1994. Muffin the dog has a cold and spends the day indoors listening to and questioning the sounds he hears inside and out. Other titles among the author's numerous "noisy" books encourage listening in a particular environment. They include *The Summer Noisy Book*, *Winter Noisy Book*, *Seashore Noisy Book*, and just plain *Noisy Book*.

Carle, Eric. *From Head to Toe*. New York: HarperCollins, 1997. Each of numerous animals moves one body part (a giraffe bends its neck, monkey waves its arms, etc.) and then challenges a child to repeat the action. The large, boldly colored illustrations and active vocabulary invite enthusiastic participation.

Cobb, Vicki. *I See Myself*. New York: HarperCollins, 2002. This is an interactive book about the role of light in the sense of sight. Children are encouraged to try some of the suggested activities so that they experience for themselves the principles involved in light. Consequently, the book is best read only a few pages at a time. A mirror and a flashlight are the most common tools required.

Coy, John. *Vroomaloom Zoom*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2000. An indulgent father takes his young daughter for a pre-bedtime ride, all with the intention of helping her fall asleep. However, the noisy situations they encounter prevent that but provide wonderful sounds for children to listen to and probably imitate.

Dunbar, Joyce. *Tell Me What It's Like to Be Big*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt, 2001. Little rabbit Willa is aware of the things she cannot do because she is little. Brother Willoughby provides assistance and is also the source of information about the improvement that growth can provide—not all of which sound totally positive to Willa. Their discussion (albeit from talking rabbits) will generate conversation about pre-school children's potential. Large illustrations are detailed enough for observation practice and additional conversation.

Freeman, Marcia. *Is It Alive?* Northborough, MA: Newbridge, 2003. How can you tell what is alive (and therefore what is not alive)? Brief text with numerous questions and large photographs in big-book format introduce growth, reproduction, need for food and water, and movement as distinguishing features between living and nonliving things. A glossary, index, and more things to think about are added.

French, Simon. *Guess the Baby*. New York: Clarion Books, 2002. His baby brother's visit to school leads Sam's class to share their own baby pictures and appreciate the changes that come with growth. The children eventually speculate about their teacher as a baby. The illustrations—especially those of the photographs—encourage close observation.

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Frost, Helen. *The Skeletal System/Muscular System/Nervous System/Circulatory System/Respiratory System*. Mankato, MN: Capstone Press, 2001. The skeleton and muscle books in this series are filled with age-appropriate information, albeit in small-book format. Their photographs, diagrams, and text contain useful examples. The little volumes on nerves, blood, and lungs, however, are generally too advanced for pre-school children. Brief glossaries, bibliographies, and indices in each book may be useful for some classes.

Godwin, Sam. *It All Makes Sense!* North Mankato, MN: Smart Apple Media, 2002. “Our five senses tell us that we are alive!” Cartoon mother and child birds introduce readers to sensory experiences. Each sense is described along familiar dimensions (seeing—near/far, hearing—loud/soft, smelling—pleasant/ horrible, tasting—bitter/sour/sweet/salty, touching—hard/soft and cold/warm). Conversation bubbles from the animals along the route add interest and additional information.

Hendry, Diana. *The Very Noisy Night*. New York: Dutton Children’s Books, 1999. Sounds during the night keep Little Mouse’s imagination working and Big Mouse awake explaining the natural sounds. Children will enjoy both predicting the sound sources in the text and exploring the colorful pictures of the mice’s busy bedroom.

Hess, Nina. *Whose Feet?* New York: Random House, 2004. The usefulness and variety of feet are explored including mole, cheetah, rabbit, bat, duck, orangutan, and little human feet. Intended as an early reader, text is appropriately limited. Illustrations are softly colored and informative.

Hindley, Judy. *Eyes, Nose, Fingers, and Toes*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 2002. Rhythmic text supplements colorful, appealing drawings that show children using various body parts. The enthusiastic expressions on the toddlers’ faces is infectious. Simple backgrounds in black crayon add great perspective without interfering with the active focus.

Hines, Anna Grossnickle. *Whose Shoes?* New York: Harcourt, 2001. Both a descriptive text and cartoon-like illustrations give clues so that readers can answer the title question for the mouse narrator. Answers can be found inside five flaps. While the visual and textual clues make good observation/listening practice, equally important are the different growth patterns represented by mother and father mice, sibling mice, and a baby mouse and their respective shoes.

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Hoban, Tana. *Look Again!* New York: MacMillan, 1971.

—*Take Another Look*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1981.

—*Look! Look! Look!* New York: Greenwillow Books, 1988.

—*Just Look*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1996.

Using black and white photographs in the first two books and color ones in the last two, the author provides no text but alternates blank pages with small cutouts with the photos of familiar objects to emphasize small components of an image. The books effectively encourage observation and conversation when the details revealed by the cutouts are used as clues to identify the larger picture.

Holzenthaler, Jean. *My Hands Can*. New York: Dutton Children's Books, 1978. Very simple text and uncomplicated illustrations detail numerous things that hands can do. Left/right, symbolic language, and the negative things hands can do all make this an appropriate beginning-of-the-year book.

Hudson, Cheryl Willis. *Hands Can*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 2003.

Accompanied by very simple, rhyming text, expressive color photographs show toddlers and preschoolers using their hands in gross and fine motor activities.

Kates, Bobbi Jane. *We're Different. We're the Same*. New York: Random House, 1992.

Rhyming text and colorful illustrations show the Sesame Street Muppets making comparisons of body parts that may look different but have similar functions.

Comparisons and illustrations may sometimes be silly, but are effective and stimulate conversation.

Kirk, Daniel. *Bigger*. New York: Putman, 1998. This book on child development is told in a childlike way by a child. The story starts in the womb and goes through the stages and activities of childhood. Cartoon-like, full-page illustrations, with growing type also, reflect the pride a small child feels in growing "bigger."

Lehn, Barbara. *What Is a Scientist?* Brookfield, CT: Millbrook Press, 1998. "A scientist is a person who . . ." Simple text, that can be read on multiple levels, and color photographs of working children describe many of the jobs that scientists do: questioning, observing, experimenting, drawing, etc. Activities shown include magnifying tools.

Llewellyn, Claire. *The Best Ears in the World*. North Mankato, MN: Smart Apple Media, 2002. Because a young rabbit thinks his ears look silly, readers get a lighthearted lesson in sound and hearing. Text can be read on two levels, but both are brief and easily understood by young children. For rabbits, hearing often means avoiding danger, but discussion of other values of listening can easily follow.

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Lunis, Natalie. *A Closer Look*. Northborough, MA: Newbridge Educational Publishing, 2007. Beautiful photographs introduce the general idea of observation and several aids to exploring small (magnifying lenses and microscopes) or faraway (binoculars and telescopes) things. A glossary, index, and more things to think about are included.

Macken, Joann Early. *Sing-Along Song*. New York: Viking, 2004. From morning's first robin to nighttime's moonrise, this little boy's "just gotta sing along." The rhyming, rhythmic text and cheerful illustrations will encourage the reader to listen and look for the sounds in their world.

Martin, Bill, Jr. and John Archambault. *Here Are My Hands*. New York: Henry Holt, 1985. Very brief text and expressive illustrations identify numerous external body parts and show children demonstrating different uses of each.

Marzollo, Jean. *Pretend You're A Cat*. New York: Penguin Books, 1990. Colorful multi-media drawings illustrate the thoughtful antics of children trying to imitate the sounds and movements of a dozen different animals. Children may not be aware of all the muscles in play, but repeating these experiences should be a good workout for little ones.

McCarthy, Mary. *A Closer Look*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 2007. Here is a peepbook with a twist. Short step-by-step questions and beautiful detailed illustrations lead the reader to look at three small items that eventually become part of a lush garden scene. Discussion can follow both looking at the details and seeing the big picture.

McMillan, Bruce, *Mouse Views*. New York: Holiday House, 1994. Someone left open the class's mouse house open, setting up opportunities for readers to see the mouse's seemingly random tour of the elementary school from a different perspective. Wonderful color photos show enlarged, close-up views of familiar school tools. For those ready to try map-reading, a map and key of where the pet went is included.

McMillan, Bruce. *Sense Suspense*. New York: Scholastic, 1994. Readers are invited, in both English and Spanish, to identify 1) what something is—based on a single piece of the whole picture; and 2) which sense(s) they would use to learn about that item. Large colorful photographs aid the game.

McMullan, Kate and Jim McMullan. *I Stink!* New York: Joanna Colter Books, 2002. This is the story of a day in a garbage truck's life, told from the truck's point of view and including the fact that garbage smells bad! An alphabet of potential garbage is included. Sounds abound and children will surely want to imitate the actions.

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Miller, Margaret. *My Five Senses*. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1994. Beautiful large photographs of children illustrate each of the five senses with four examples per sense. Text is very brief, but the pictures evoke further conversation. Whatever else the senses may be used for, the book concludes: “With our five senses, we enjoy our world.”

Moncure, Jane Belk. *The Five Senses*. Chicago: Childrens Press, 1990. Prof. Facto and a young visitor to the Five Senses Museum discuss the value and use of each of the five senses, including some comparisons with other animals. Several pages of easy experiments are added.

Morgenstern, Constance. *Good Night, Feet*. New York: Henry Holt, 1991. It is time for bed, and many readers will be familiar with the ritual of saying goodnight to various parts of the body before relaxing into sleep. The text reviews some of the daily activities of seven different parts, while the gently colored illustrations focus on getting the part into bed.

Otto, Carolyn. *I Can Tell By Touching*. New York: HarperCollins, 1994. Most books about touching give lots of examples of things to touch. This one does too, but it also suggests how touching is different than other senses, or what kinds of things you can learn from touching that you can't learn otherwise. Colorful illustrations have sufficient detail to make this good observation practice also. Readers will want to repeat some of the book's experiences.

Paul, Ann Whitford. *Hello Toes! Hello Feet!* New York: DK Publishing, 1998. From getting up to going to bed, this little girl's feet are active indoors and outside. Not all of her activities would be mother-approved (kicking the table, stomping her juice can), but children will love to try them all.

Pearson, Susan. *Hooray for Feet*. New York: Blue Apple, 2005. Simple, rhyming text and bright illustrations celebrate feet and toes that can run, jump, dance, move fast or slowly, and take children wherever they choose to go. Readers may find it hard to keep their feet still while reading this book!

Reidy, Hannah. *All Sorts of Noises*. Minneapolis, MN: Picture Window Books, 2005. Colorful cartoon drawings show children and grownups—and other animals—as they hear noises from morning to night and in diverse situations. Words for sounds are splashed across the pages.

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Reiser, Lynn. *Beach Feet*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1996. Fun illustrations and lots of footnotes with friendly scientific explanations show the feet of animals—including people—found at the beach. Footnote information is easily deleted in favor of the simple alliterative text and discussion of the illustrations.

Reiser, Lynn. *My Baby and Me*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008. These interactions between babies and their slightly older siblings can remind children of their own growth. The simple text and photographs of familiar situations should provide ample opportunities for discussion.

Rockwell, Anne. *Growing Like Me*. Orlando: Harcourt, 2001. The young narrator is aware of the potential for growth in the plants and animals in his world. He knows, for instance, that the white blossoms on the blackberry bushes will yield sweet fruit eventually, and the blue eggs in the nest will hatch into robins soon. He also knows that his baby brother will someday grow up to be a big boy. Because of the examples used, the book nicely supports the concept that growth is a characteristic of all living things.

Rockwell, Lizzy. *The Busy Body Book*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2004. “Busy” is the operative word in this title as the book describes in text and pictures how the body works inside and out. Several appropriately detailed diagrams are interspersed, inviting more study. Fitness is encouraged both in the colorful illustrations and with several additional ideas at the end.

Ryder, Joanne. *My Father’s Hands*. New York: Morrow Junior Books, 1994. “No one will ever bring me better treasures than the ones cupped in my father’s hands.” This is a fitting conclusion to a gentle story of the wonders of nature shared by a father with his young daughter. Subtle details, in words and pictures, of several body parts make this a great conversation-starter and observation experience.

Seuss, Dr. *The Foot Book*. New York: Random House, 1968. With typical Dr. Seuss characters and illustrations, all kinds of feet do all the things that feet do.

Showers, Paul. *The Listening Walk*. New York: HarperCollins, 1991. How is a “listening walk” different from any other walk? A little girl, her father, and their dog Major demonstrate while the little girl describes what they hear when they are quiet and actively listening. Her descriptions suggest that being a good observer probably enhances the listening experiences. Her reminder at the end that you don’t have to go far or even outside to hear sounds is a good one for classroom practice.

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Suhr, Mandy. *I Am Growing*. Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books, 1991. Growth “seems to happen without your noticing.” This book suggests how their activities change as babies become children, even though they may not be aware of the changes. It also discusses the role of food, sleep, and exercise in the growth process. Text is simple and cartoon illustrations promote discussion. Comparisons are made to plants and other animals. Several activities are suggested to make children more aware of both their own growth and that of other living things.

Sweeney, Joan. *Me and My Amazing Body*. New York: Dragonfly Books, 2000. Anatomy 101 for children! Beginning with her skin, a young girl (with a missing tooth) describes how the otherwise internal parts of her body (bones, muscles, brain, blood, heart, lungs, and stomach) function. The colorful illustrations make this a book for curious children to pore over. A page of facts is added.

Sweeney, Joan. *Me and My Senses*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2003. Using the pretext of a question about her lunch menu, a young girl uses each of her senses in discovering the answer. Then some basic science about each sense is provided in simple text and colorful cartoon illustrations. The idea of using single or multiple senses at once is also explored briefly. The misleading items she is holding when she first asks the question should make an interesting side discussion for the observant reader.

Tekavec, Heather. *What’s That Awful Smell?* New York: Penguin Young Readers, 2004. “Dog,” while looking for a cool place for a nap, instead encounters a bad smell. He engages other animals in using their senses to try to solve the mystery of the awful smell in the barn. Children will enjoy solving a mystery involving noses.

Walton, Rick. *My Two Hands, My Two Feet*. New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 2000. This book will need to be read twice, once about hands and once about feet, first from front to mid-book and then flipped over between readings! In each case, action begins with rising from bed and ends with going to bed. Illustrations are clean and boldly colorful; brief text uses descriptive words.

Yagyu, Genichiro. *The Soles of Your Feet*. Brooklyn, NY. Kane/Miller Book Publishers, 1997. Originally published in Japan, this book introduces a body part that does not usually get much attention but may be the appropriate “more” for some children. Human feet are compared to other animals. Other stray pieces of information are provided in bold text and funny margin comments from the characters pictured. Functional illustrations tend to be line drawings in limited colors.

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Young, Ed. *Seven Blind Mice/Siete Ratones Ciegos*. New York: Philomel Books, 1992. In this adaptation of The Blind Men and the Elephant fable, seven blind mice investigate a “strange Something” by the pond. The first six (identified by bold colors) choose to explore only a small part of “Something.” It is only when the white mouse wisely investigates the whole that the big picture is revealed. Caldecott Honor Book

Zoehfeld, Kathleen Weidner. *What’s Alive?* New York: HarperCollins, 1995. The similarities and differences among several living things are used to begin a discussion about how you can tell the difference between living and nonliving things, and the common characteristics of living things.

