Why not encourage your child to get dirty by making a mud kitchen in your garden...

Examples for Utensils:
Empty yoghurt pots; plastic or metal containers; plastic scoops you find in dried baby milk; jelly moulds; wooden spoons.
You can even add fillings to your mud pies by using shells and stones!

Should you wish a copy of our free Messy Play booklets please contact Sharon at sharonmccluskie@playscotland.org

Should you wish to share your mucky pups photos please email them to us at info@playscotland.org

Further information on Play Scotland including our Parents & Families Section and our KidsZone can be found at www.playscotland.org

You can now follow Play Scotland on Twitter and Facebook
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"Every child should have mud pies ... and any child who has been deprived of these has been deprived of the best part of education."

Luther Burbank (American horticulturalist and botanist, 1849 - 1926)
Have you ever looked at a child covered in mud and laughed? Children, no matter what age they are, love playing in the mud and getting dirty ...and what’s more... it’s FREE!!

Dirt is GOOD for you!!

UK experts, working on behalf of Persil, have revealed the definitive list of 33 things kids should do before their 10th birthday as part of their ‘Dirt is Good’ campaign:

1. Roll on your side down a grassy bank
2. Make a mud pie
3. Make your own modeling dough mixture
4. Collect frog spawn
5. Make a perfume from flower petals
6. Grow cress on a windowsill
7. Make a papier mâché mask
8. Build a sandcastle
9. Climb a tree
10. Make a den in the garden
11. Make a painting using your hands and feet
12. Organise a teddy bears picnic
13. Have your face painted
14. Play with a friend in the sand
15. Make some bread
16. Make snow angels
17. Create a clay sculpture
18. Take part in a ....
19. Feed a farm animal
20. Pick some strawberries
21. Play pooh sticks
22. Recognise 5 different bird species
23. Find some worms
24. Ride a bike through a muddy puddle
25. Make and fly a kite
26. Plant a tree
27. Build a nest out of grass and twigs
28. Find 10 different leaves in the park
29. Grow vegetables
30. Make breakfast in bed for your parent(s)
31. Make a mini assault course in your garden (or friends garden)

Exploding Art – One for Outdoors!

What you need:
- Large piece of paper
- Zip lock sandwich bags
- Craft paint
- Toilet paper
- Baking Soda
- White vinegar
- Cup and tablespoon

What to do:
Mix the milk and cornstarch until blended.
Add one drop of food colouring at a time. Once you think it is dark enough, add a drop or two more as it will lighten up when it is used on your child’s face.

Using a small paintbrush, paint pictures on your child’s face. They can even paint your face too!

To remove, use damp cloth or kitchen roll.

Dear Parent,
You probably know instinctively that dirt is good for building up your child’s immune system. You might be pleased to know that Scientists from University of California have published research to back this up. It shows that if children are too clean it can impair the skin’s ability heal1. However, try and make sure young children don’t actually eat the dirt!

Also, normal bacteria living on the skin triggers a pathway that helps prevent inflammation when we get hurt. The bugs dampen down overactive immune responses that can cause cuts and grazes to swell2.

Many believe our obsession with cleanliness is to blame for the recent boom in allergies as children’s immune systems are not being allowed to develop naturally.

Evidence is growing that dirt and germs can protect against disease – and that our indoor-based, ultra-clean lifestyles are bad for our health3.

According to hygiene hypothesis, asthma, eczema, hay fever and childhood diabetes are all being fuelled by childhoods in which youngsters rarely roll in the mud, splash in puddles or play with animals4.

Research also suggests bacteria-exposure not only boosts our immune systems, but alters our vulnerability to conditions such as depression and exposure to friendly soil bacteria could improve mood by boosting the immune system just as effectively as antidepressant drugs5.

"The natural immune system does not have as much to do as it did 50 years ago because we’ve increased our efforts to protect our children from dirt and germs”
Marc McMorris6

Are you one of the many parents who don’t want their child’s clothes to get dirty. You often hear when out and about in parks parents shouting “don’t get dirty...” When really, in this day and age of the washing machine, there is no need for a child to keep their clothes clean!

Children enjoy messy play and want to get muddy, jump in puddles… in fact the muckier they become, the more fun it can be. Children need to know that it is OK for them go out and get dirty. Keep an ‘old’ set of clothes for outdoor play.

Messy Play can also help develop children’s senses as they explore the different textures of materials and helps them develop their imagination which allows them to play freely.

Playing in the mud is just as much as fun as playing with sand, but more easily accessible for some. It is also great exercise for children, as digging is hard work!

Yours playfully
Sharon

References
1 & 2 Dirt can be good for children, say scientists, BBC News http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8373690.stm