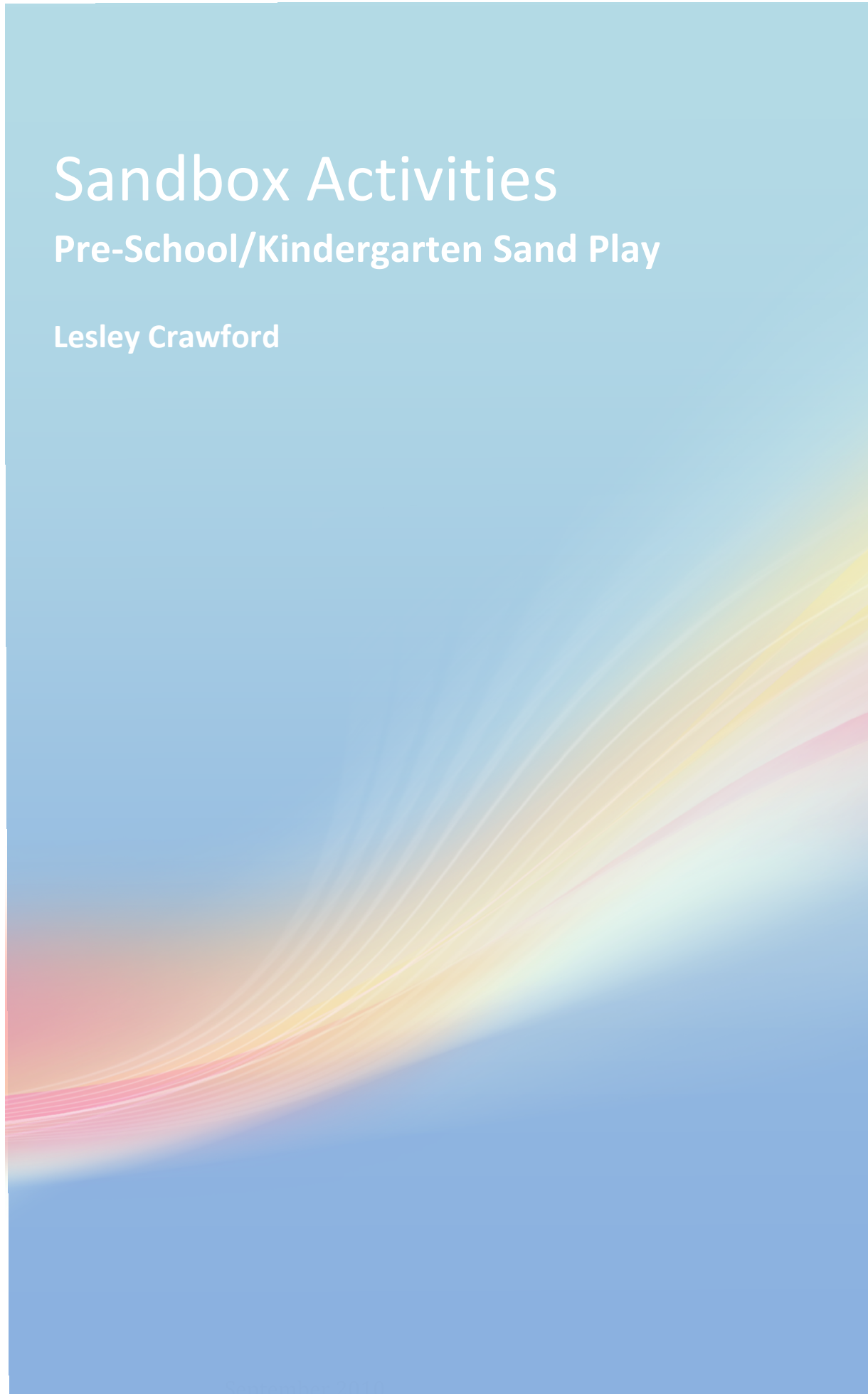


Sandbox Activities

Pre-School/Kindergarten Sand Play

Lesley Crawford



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About the Author

Lesley Crawford received her Bachelor of Education from the University of Alberta. She received her Level 3 Advanced Qualification Certificate for Day Care centers from Alberta Family and Social Services and has worked with Early Childhood programs from 1970 until 1998 in the capacity of Brownie Leader, Playschool, Kindergarten and Grade One teacher, daycare giver and daycare administrator. She has a passion for early childhood programs, and firmly believes the best way to prepare children for the formal school programming is to give them every tool available for learning, questioning, exploring in the early childhood program and create a fascination for learning.

Introduction

Sand is one of the most easily available resources to aid the early childhood learning process. It provides therapy for an upset child. It lends itself to group or lone activity. It can be piled, shaped, scraped, dumped, poked, measured, and sifted. Children learn new vocabulary and apply descriptive phrases to the activity being played out in the sand. As such, the sandbox should be an integral part of the play area.

It takes such a long time to set up centers in the early childhood centers. The purpose of this book is to provide activities for one of the centers so the provider can spend planning time on the other centers. Since no two children are alike, and no two days are alike, the activity needs to be adapted to meet the needs of your children.

The activities are the creative endeavors of many childcare workers setting sand centers, and brainstormed from early childhood instructors providing workers with new ideas. This book is only a starting point because new ideas should be added. There are so many opportunities for enhancement. Once an idea is recorded, it becomes a permanent record.

One important facet of any sand program is the sand supply cupboard. If the resources are designated just for the sandbox and labeled for easy access, the center is much easier to set up.

January

<i>Week</i>	<i>Year One</i>	<i>Year Two</i>
1 - Design center	Children arrange popsicle sticks/tongue depressors in sand box.	Children arrange toilet /paper towel rolls in sand box.
2 -Toboggan hills – This activity can be extended by testing the slopes with small balls, or wooden beads.	Children use graders and shovels to make different sized hills.	Children use boards to move the sand into hills, and then can use them to brace the sides of their hills
3 - Land Plans – to extend the activity children can design a map showing how the sites are arranged and then set the sand center according to the map.	Children design a town using different sized pails for houses, trees in parks, cars in front of houses.	Children design a farm using barn, machinery, and animals enclosed behind coffee stir stick fences. They could plant pinecone crops.
4 Free play	Children play with pails, shovels, water/sand wheels.	Children use wet sand to fill molds, or push molds into sand to create image.

SUPPLY LIST

Sets - Farm animals, barn, farm machinery, trees, cars, graders, pails, shovels, water/sand wheel, sand molds

Nature – Pinecones

Miscellaneous - Popsicle sticks, tongue depressors, coffee stir sticks, toilet and paper towel rolls, boards

February

<i>Week</i>	<i>Year One</i>	<i>Year Two</i>
1 -Science	Children shape sand into volcano, and adults add vinegar and baking soda to center to make volcano erupt.	Children bury metal washers in the sand, and then use a magnet to locate them.
2 -Valentines activities	Adults help children put water into a pail and add sand until it is thick. This mixture is poured into the sandbox or onto a cookie tray. The children roll sand flat with rolling pin. Then, the children press deep walled cookie cutters or a heart shaped pan into the sand.	Children fill chocolate candy wrappers that come in boxes of chocolates with sand and then arrange them in candy boxes, or fill different sized heart shaped pans with sand and decorate with stones, candles,
3 - Styrofoam molds	Children place Styrofoam molds (packaging materials) in the sandbox and then use people and animals to make scenes.	Children place Styrofoam molds (packaging materials) in the sandbox and then use trees and vehicles to make scenes.
4 Free play	Children play with pails and shovels in the sand.	Children play with pails and shovels in the sand.

SUPPLY LIST

Sets people, animals, trees, vehicles, deep walled cookie Valentine cookie cutters, sand pails and shovels

Nature – Stones

Miscellaneous – vinegar, baking soda, cookie tray, rolling pin, chocolate candy wrappers, chocolate boxes, heart shaped chocolate boxes, Styrofoam molds

March

Note: trade Easter activities in April if Easter falls in March

<i>Week</i>	<i>Year One</i>	<i>Year Two</i>
1 Free play	Children play with dump trucks in the sand.	Children play with cars and trucks in the sand.
2 Spring rains	Adults help the children make mud pies and then children decorate with seeds, twigs, leaves, pinecones, stones.	Children arrange pussy willows, branches with seedpods in sand box. This activity could be enhanced by sorting them in corners of sand box
3 Science	Adults put sand in different sized squeeze bottles, and let the children squeeze the sand into piles. Note how size of holes affects how fast sand comes out, and how easily it comes out.	Adults cut the tops off plastic bottles and poke holes of various sizes into the bottom of the bottles and let the children fill them with sand, then use them as sifters. Again, discuss difference in ease of use, depending on size of holes.
4 Out of hibernation	Children play with frogs and blocks in the sand. The children could use tin foil plates for ponds and arrange frogs and blocks around ponds to expand activity.	Children play with bears and caves (half buried drinking cups in sand) in the sand.

SUPPLY LIST

Sets - frogs, blocks, bears, dump trucks, cars and trucks

Nature – seeds, twigs, pinecones, pussy willows, branches with seedpods, stones

Miscellaneous –squeeze bottles, plastic bottles, tin foil, trays, drinking cups for caves

April

<i>Week</i>	<i>Year One</i>	<i>Year Two</i>
1 Easter	Children fill plastic eggs with sand and arrange them in different sized Easter baskets.	Adults help children use spray bottles filled with water to wet down sand on cookie tray. Then, the children can smooth the sand and use deep walled Easter cookie cutters to create Easter scene, or just make Easter cookies
2 Animals	Adults bury an assortment of rubber snakes in the sand, and have the children search for them.	Adults bury an assortment of plastic farm animals in the sand and have the children search for them. Children could extend this activity by sorting their discoveries into different containers.
3 Sand pictures	Give each child a shoebox lid. The children put glue on the bottom where they want the sand to stick. They can make a beach scene, using sand, shells, paint for sky, cotton balls for clouds. Just have fun creating.	Children wet sand in the bottom of a baking dish and then draw pictures in the wet sand using twigs, cutlery, straws, pizza cutters, fluted pastry wheels
4 Play sets	Children play with cowboys, horses and blocks in the sand.	Children play with dinosaurs and blocks in the sand.

SUPPLY LIST

Sets – plastic Easter eggs (that can be filled), different sized Easter baskets, deep walled Easter cookie cutters, cowboys, horses, rubber snakes, farm animals, cowboys and horses, dinosaurs, blocks

Nature – twigs and seashells

Miscellaneous – shoebox lids, cotton balls, straws, cutlery, cookie tray, pizza cutter, fluted pastry wheels

May

<i>Week</i>	<i>Year One</i>	<i>Year Two</i>
1 Gardens	Children use materials like bobby pins, Q-tips, popsicle sticks, stir sticks, straws as crops. Then, they put sand in a sieve, and hold it over the garden to simulate rain.	Give each child garden gloves, and a rake to make furrows. Adults provide a selection of sticks with seed packets attached and children place them at the end of the furrows. Or, children plant stones in the furrows. Then, they put sand in a sieve, and hold it over the garden to simulate rain.
2 Mother's Day	Children fill flowerpots with sand. They then make a floral arrangement with a variety of plastic flowers and leaves.	Give each child an apron. Children use a sifter, measuring cups, wooden spoons and mixing bowls in the sand to make "cake batter". Once the "cake batter" is ready they can pour it into cake or cupcake pans.
3 Memorial Day	Children arrange houses (small milk cartons) and make a city street. They can then place a small flag in front of each house.	(same as year one)
4 Free play	Children play with dump trucks in the sand.	Children play with cars and trucks in the sand.

SUPPLY LIST

Sets – garden gloves, garden tools, seed packets, flower pots, plastic flowers and leaves, measuring cups, sifter, aprons, packet of tiny flags, dump trucks, cars, trucks

Nature –

Miscellaneous – bobby pins, Q-tips, popsicle and coffee stir sticks, straws, sieve, wooden spoons, cake or cupcake pans, milk containers

June

<i>Week</i>	<i>Year One</i>	<i>Year Two</i>
1 Summer treats	Lemonade – Children use different sized spoons to fill different sized pitchers with sand.	Pies - Children use different sized spoons to fill different sized pie plates with sand.
2 Free play	Children play with dinosaurs and blocks in the sand.	Children play with dinosaurs and blocks in the sand.
3 Father's Day	Children are a road construction crew using graders, pave with sand smoother, cover road with tin foil, line sides of roads with stones, add road signs	Children are ranchers and arrange cowboys, horses, fences, wagons, cattle in sandbox.
4 Science	Children experiment with the balance scales in sand	Children make space vehicles by filling three different sized containers with wet sand, using each inverted section as a base for the next. In the end, one space vehicle will be created.

SUPPLY LIST

Sets – trees, graders, road signs, cowboys, horses, cattle, wagons, animals, dinosaurs, blocks

Nature –stones, seashells

Miscellaneous – different sized pitchers, wooden spoons, tin foil plates, tin foil, stones, different sized containers, balance scale

July

<i>Week</i>	<i>Year One</i>	<i>Year Two</i>
1 Transportation	Children play with airplanes in the sand.	Children play with trains in the sand.
2 Animals	Adults help children spray sand to make it wet. Now children shape the body of snake and keep adding segments to make it longer and longer. This works well in the sandbox at a playground because the snake can be very long.	Adults help children spray sand to make it wet. Now children shape the body, and add tentacles to make an octopus, or legs and head to make a turtle. This works as a group activity – they body can be huge, and then features added.
3 Vacations	Children play with forest animals and trees in the sand.	Adults can bury treasure in the sand box (foil wrapped objects) and challenge children to find them.
4 Free play	Children play with dump trucks in the sand.	Children play with cars and trucks in the sand.

SUPPLY LIST

Sets – airplanes, trains, trees, forest animals, dump trucks, cars and trucks.

Nature -

Miscellaneous – tin foil

August

<i>Week</i>	<i>Year One</i>	<i>Year Two</i>
1 Containers	Children use scoops and funnels to fill plastic pop bottles with sand.	Children use scoops to fill different sized paper bags with sand.
2 Sand art	Adults fill spice jars (with large holes) with sand. Children use them to shake over glue squirted on paper and then shake off loose sand.	Children fill a flour sifter with sand, sift over glue squirted on paper and then shake off loose sand.
3 Architecture	Children develop a landscape in the sandbox – hills, forests from packages of trees, tin foil plate for pond, train tracks with popsicle sticks.	Children build a sand castle with wet sand – and use toilet rolls for turrets, surround outside with rocks, wood or popsicle sticks for drawbridge, straws, shells for decorations.
4 Construction vehicles	Children play with small construction vehicles in the sand.	Children play with large construction vehicles in the sand.

SUPPLY LIST

Sets – scoops, funnels, construction vehicles, trees,

Nature –

Miscellaneous – different sized paper bags, different sized pop bottles, spice jars with big holes, flour sifter, glue, tin foil plate, popsicle sticks, toilet rolls, rocks, straws, shells

September

<i>Week</i>	<i>Year One</i>	<i>Year Two</i>
1 Nutrition	Children set up a restaurant serving sand filled French fries and hamburger containers, ice cream and drink holders on trays.	Children pack school lunch boxes with sand filled juice boxes, yogurt containers with lids, raisin boxes, M&M (or similar noisy) bags.
2 - Autumn	Children use coffee scoops to fill different sizes and shapes of coffee filters with sand.	Adults bury nuts in several places in sandbox Children use tongs to retrieve them and store them in pails.
3 Design Center – The sandbox could have a rolling pin handy to erase one design so a new one can be created.	Adults help children wet sand. The children use plastic combs with some of the teeth missing to make designs in the sand. Make sure the teeth missing are in different arrangements so the patterns will look different. Children could also use forks to add to the design.	Adults help children wet the sand. Children use pizza cutters, twigs, coffee stirrers, fluted pastry wheels to make designs.
4 –Transportation	Children play with motorcycles and boards in the sand.	Children play with cars and trucks in the sand.

SUPPLY LISTS

Sets - motorcycles, cars, trucks, boards, lunch boxes,

Nature – seeds with stiff stalks, twigs

Miscellaneous – milk cartons, coffee filters, coffee scoops, rolling pin, plastic combs, forks, French fry and hamburger containers, ice cream and drink holders, juice boxes, yogurt containers with lids, raisin boxes, M&M (or similar noisy) bags

October

<i>Week</i>	<i>Year One</i>	<i>Year Two</i>
1 _ Harvest	Adults help children wet the sand to fill fruit and vegetable molds, or press fruit and vegetable molds into the wet sand.	Children use tongs to pick up seeds in sand and put in containers
2- Thanksgiving -	Children make an American Thanksgiving scene. They need cone shapes for tepees, canoes and Indian figurines.	Children put sand in baskets and arrange dried gourds, feathers, wheat and cornstalks .
3 Animal sets	Children play with dinosaurs and blocks in the sand.	Children play with horses, cattle and blocks in the sand.
4 Halloween	Children fill hollow plastic pumpkins with sand.	Adults help children wet the sand and then children make face shapes. Children can scoop out the eyes with melon scoopers, shape the nose, and use sticks to draw other features.

SUPPLY LIST

Sets – vegetable/ fruit molds, tepees, canoes, Indian figurines, dinosaurs, horses, cattle, blocks

Nature – seeds, dried gourds, feathers, wheat stalks, corn stalks

Miscellaneous – tongs, baskets, plastic hollow pumpkins, melon scooper, sticks

November

<i>Week</i>	<i>Year One</i>	<i>Year Two</i>
1 Science	Children pour sand through different sized funnels and make different sized hills.	Children use a sieve to uncover nuggets buried in the sand and place them into containers.
2 Containers	Children fill different sized paper bags with sand.	Adults cut the tops off cardboard milk containers and give children scoops from laundry detergents to fill them.
3 Styrofoam packaging materials	Children put Styrofoam molds (packaging materials) in center of sandbox and add people, animals to make scenes.	Children put Styrofoam molds (packaging materials) in center of sandbox and add trees and vehicles to make a scene.
4 Free play	Children play with dump trucks in the sand.	Children play with cars and trucks in the sand.

SUPPLY LIST

Sets – people, animals, trees, vehicles, dump trucks, cars and trucks

Nature –

Miscellaneous – funnels from laundry detergent, sieve, containers, sandwich or snack sized paper bags, cardboard milk containers, Styrofoam packaging materials

December

<i>Week</i>	<i>Year One</i>	<i>Year Two</i>
1 Christmas	Children arrange different sized pine trees to make a Christmas tree farm.	Adults help children wet sand with spray bottles. Children use a gingerbread cookie cutter to make shape and add features with stones
2 Christmas decorations	Children fill gift boxes, gift bags with sand.	Children arrange empty ribbon spools, and wrapping paper rolls in the sand to make patterns.
3 Christmas dinner	Children play with pots, pans, and spoons of all sizes and shapes in the sand.	Children play with serving dishes, spoons, plates, bowls, glasses, and trays in the sand.
4 Animal kingdom	Children make a zoo with strawberry baskets for cages, zoo animals, boards for fences, cars in parking lot	Children make an oasis in sand with palm trees, desert animals, tin foil for water

SUPPLY LIST

Sets – pine trees, gingerbread cookie cutters, shovels, pots and pans, spoons, dishes, plates, bowls, glasses, trays, zoo animals, desert animals, cars

Nature –

Miscellaneous – spray bottles, gift boxes, gift bags, ribbon spools, wrapping paper rolls, strawberry baskets, boards