



**A Shared Vision**

Partners in Pediatric Blindness and Visual Impairment

## Trail Mix

*A fun and easy sensory experience*

Any way you make it, what's not to like about trail mix? It's an easy, healthy snack when you're on the road or on a trail.

With a variety of ingredients, there's something sweet or salty, chewy or crunchy, for everyone in the family. When you do this activity with your child who's visually impaired, mixing the ingredients is fun, sensory play and encourages exploration with hands and feet. And the measuring, scooping, pouring, and stirring are great for developing tactile skills and developing important concepts.

Make this easy recipe to enjoy at home or give as gifts.



## Utensils

- Large mixing bowl
- Measuring cup, scoop, or spoon for each smaller bowl
- Large mixing spoon or a ladle






## Crunchy Ingredients

- Cereal (Cheerios, Kix, Chex, etc.)
- Goldfish crackers
- Mini pretzels
- Teddy grahams
- Mini Club crackers or Cheez Its
- Oyster crackers
- Mini Nilla wafers
- Gerber Puffs

## Sweet Ingredients

- Dried fruit (raisins, cranberries, blueberries, bananas)
- Chocolate chips, white chocolate chips, peanut butter chips, or butterscotch chips
- Mini marshmallows
- Yogurt melts
- Yogurt-covered raisins

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Recipe	Suggested Sensory Directions
<p>1. Choose two ingredients from each of the “Crunchy” and “Sweet” lists and pour them into four smaller bowls or containers.</p>	 Smell your ingredients. What smells sweet? Is it the vanilla in the Nilla wafers? The cinnamon on the Teddy grahams? Something might smell fruity, like the raisins or dried blueberries. Something smells like cheese! Is it the Goldfish?
	 Does food make a sound when you pour it into a bowl? What kind of bowls create more sound? Cheerios in a bowl sound different than a Gerber Puff. Dried fruit is noisier than mini marshmallows because of its dense texture. A shiny, metal bowl makes more sound than a plastic bowl.
	 It’s hard to choose just one ingredient to taste! Remember, these foods are “chokeables,” so careful supervision is necessary when your child is snacking on their trail mix ingredients.
	 Let your child try spooning or scooping the ingredients into smaller bowls. If a few cereal pieces spill on your work surface, allow your child to pick one up with their pincer grasp. This is a more advanced skill so you could start with a larger cracker like a Teddy graham or Cheez It.
<p>2. Keep your child’s abilities and interests in mind when choosing your utensils. Spooning requires more dexterity than scooping; filling is harder than dumping.</p>	 As you get set up, talk about what utensils you’re going to use. Label them. If your child is hesitant about helping you cook, let them touch the different utensils or bang them on the work surface.

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Recipe	Suggested Sensory Directions
<p>3. Spoon or scoop the ingredients from the four smaller bowls into the large bowl. Stir the ingredients together.</p>	<p> Is the mixture hard or easy to stir? Try allowing your child to put their hand over yours as you stir. Take turns blending the trail mix.</p> <p> Talk about how you're scooping or spooning the ingredients from the small bowls into the big bowl. The big bowl is becoming full! Listen as you dump the ingredients into the big bowl. There're less ingredients in the small bowls and more in the big bowl. You're teaching your child some action words and important concepts about measurement and size.</p> <p> Even trail mix can have visual contrast when you mix white marshmallows with orange Goldfish, or yogurt-covered raisins with regular raisins.</p>
<p>4. Measure about a half to a full cup of the trail mix into Ziploc bags, cups, or other containers so you can keep the mix handy for road trips or hikes, to give as gifts, or just to have a handy snack in the house.</p>	<p> Continue using action words like "measure," "stir," "scoop," "pour," and "mix" to label what you and your child are doing.</p> <p> As you make a bag for a family member, a friend, or a favorite teacher, talk about the pleasure of giving gifts. Gifts can be given at any time and show a person you care about them.</p>
<p>5. When your mixing bowl is empty, pick two more ingredients from each ingredient list and make a new combination of trail mix! The flavors are endless!</p>	<p> The bowl is empty. What will you do next? Will you make another batch of trail mix or put everything away for another time? Choice making helps children become more independent. Observe your child's cues. Do they want to continue or end the activity?</p> <p> If your child isn't eating by mouth, trail mix ingredients are fun for just sensory play with hands or feet. You can even make a sensory bin with cereal, marshmallows, and other textures or smells.</p>