**BIG IDEA:** Humans and animals use their senses to explore the world around them. Encourage your child to explore their five senses by comparing themselves to a rusty spotted cat and engaging in a fun hands-on activity.

**DISCUSS:** A rusty spotted cat can use his senses to create a “map” in his mind to help him find his way home. Review the five senses with your child (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch). Ask your child to imagine they are creating their own map around your home. What type of things would you see, hear, smell, or feel that would let you know you are close to home?

**EXPLORE:** The rusty spotted cat has whiskers that are very sensitive to touch. People don’t have whiskers, but we can use our hands to feel things around us. In this hands-on activity, children use their sense of touch to match different textures.
**MATERIALS:**
- **Bowls** (or cups)
- **A variety of materials with different textures**
  (ex: cereal, oatmeal, gravel, coffee beans, beads, cotton balls, rubber bands, felt or other scraps of fabric, sand, glitter, etc.)
- **Bandanas or other fabric to use as a blindfold** (optional)

**PROCEDURE:**
1. Collect a variety of small materials for the activity. These materials can be household items with different textures, such as oatmeal, sand, coffee beans, beads, or scraps of fabric.
2. Select one material and fill two bowls with it to create a set.
3. Continue creating sets with each of your selected materials. Create as many matching pairs as you like.
4. Next, either blindfold your child or have them close their eyes.
5. Rearrange the bowls to mix up the matched pairs.
6. Allow your child to use their fingers to feel the materials inside each of the bowls. If you are working with younger children who are using the blindfold, you may need to assist your child and guide them toward the different bowls of materials.
7. See if your child can correctly match each set of materials. Allow your child to guess what each material is.
8. After they have attempted to match each pair, allow your child to remove their blindfold and see how many textures they were able to identify.

**REFLECT:**
Ask your child to describe how the different materials felt. You can introduce vocabulary to describe the different textures like bumpy, rough, smooth, soft, etc. You may also ask if they liked the feel of the different textures or not. Keep in mind that children may not always identify the textures correctly, which is okay. Discuss why it might have been harder to identify by touch than by sight. Reflect on how we use our sense of touch and our other senses everyday!