



Parents as Teachers.

ACTIVITY *page*

24-36 months

**What do we have?**

- > Plastic tablecloth
- > Old adult-size shirt (optional)
- > Fingerprint paper or waxed paper
- > Large tray or cookie sheet
- > Paper towels or wipes for cleaning up
- > Fingerpaints
- > Small sponges, cotton swabs, plastic spoons, and other tools for spreading
- > Toddler book

**Book sharing**

*When you read together, encourage your child to name colors in the pictures. If you read a book about color mixing, talk about how your child can combine two colors to get a new one.*

# Fingerpainting: Using Small Muscles and Experimenting

**How do we do it?**

1. Prepare an area for messy fun by spreading out the tablecloth and putting the paper and tray in the middle. Have paper towels or wipes nearby.
2. Ask if your child wants to wear the shirt as a paint smock.
3. Let your child choose a piece of paper. Help contain the mess by placing the paper in the tray. (Or just paint directly on the cookie sheet and wash it off afterward.)
4. Place a tablespoon of paint on the paper. Show your child how to touch the paint or use a spreading tool.
5. Encourage your child to experiment – draw with one finger, make fingerprint designs, or mash the paint blob with his whole hand.
6. After you play awhile, add spreading tools like a sponge, cotton swab, or spoon. Watch what your child does.

**What's in it for us?**

- > **Motor:** Your child is exercising the small muscles that he will use in writing.
- > **Cognitive:** Your child is watching how he leaves marks when he touches soft substances; he is exploring cause and effect.
- > Cotton swabs and sponges allow your child to explore how to make marks with tools. This prepares him for writing with a pencil in school.

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(child skill or parent skill defined by the parent/parent educator)

**Your child's brain**

*Your child's brain is making connections while he explores new materials, describes what he is touching, and uses the material to create.*

**Safety tip**

*You can encourage your child to explore paint in many different ways – even to smell it – but remind him not to put it in his mouth. Tasting a small amount of nontoxic paint won't harm your child, but it's best to teach him not to eat paint at all.*



## Parents as Teachers.

### Parenting behavior

**Communicating:** You are supporting your child's language development as you talk together about what he is doing and the colors he is using.

### What I noticed about my child ...

### What I noticed about myself ...

#### Continued learning

*A similar sensory activity to fingerpainting is mixing cornstarch and water on a cookie sheet to create cornstarch ooze. You can control the consistency by adding more water or cornstarch. The ooze shows different stages of matter. When you touch it, there will be a puddle from the warmth of your finger. It will drip through your fingers. If you leave the ooze out a while, it dries to a powder. (And that makes it easy to clean up!)*