

Homemade Finger-Paint

Invite your child to enjoy the sensation and texture of sliding their fingers through paint and watching as patterns emerge where their fingers have been.

How to Do It

Boil water ensuring your child is well clear of this process. Encourage your child to mix the cornflour and hair conditioner in the bowl with the cold water. Once combined, you will need to gradually add in the hot water a little at a time, stirring until the mixture becomes smooth and thick.

Leave in a safe space to cool. Separate the mixture into small containers and add a different drop or two of food colouring or paint to each container and ask your child to mix until they are happy with their colours. Cover your painting area - a table or on the ground outside - with your plastic cover to protect surfaces from splatters. Provide your child with some paper or encourage them to use the plastic cover as their painting surface. Old cardboard boxes are a real canvas too!

Encourage your child to dip their fingers into the paint - now stand by and watch their delight!

What Learning is Occurring?

- Small **muscle development** and **coordination**. Encourage your child to try large sweeping movements that explore symmetry in the body and of crossing their arm all the way across their body. Both these movement patterns are important for **future handwriting**.
- **Creative** thinking and mark making.
- **Sensory exploration**, which **stimulates the brain** and **calms the body**.
- **Language** and **communication** skills – comprehending and following instructions. Expansion of **vocabulary**; you might introduce and use words such as pattern, texture, paint, fingers, thick, runny, cold, warm etc. Use colour and shape names in your conversation too! Ask questions and wonder aloud with your child about how the paint feels, what your child is doing, how new colours, marks, shapes are being made etc.

Age Considerations

- Babies and toddlers: start with a small amount, and perhaps in a small space like the highchair or on a table if your baby is unsure. When their confidence builds, place the paint on the ground and let baby crawl through the paint.
- Preschool and transition to school: children will enjoy swirling the paint around – add the food colouring or paint to the cornflour mixture once it is on the table and encourage your child mix and swirl the colours and create rainbows. Grab a piece of paper and gently press down over the paint to make a print of the marks in the painting. Finger paint is a great medium to use to practice forming shapes and known letters. If your child is pleased with the result, take a print. If not, simply swipe your hand across the paint and try again.

Things you will need

- A Jug/kettle or saucepan
- 2 cups cornflour
- 3 Tbs hair conditioner
- Large bowl
- ½ cup cold water
- ½ cup hot water
- Several small containers
- Spoons and a spatula
- A few drops of food colouring or water-based paint
- Old plastic tablecloth or shower curtain or tarpaulin, or newspaper
- Paper
- Apron or old clothes

Tips

- If your child is initially reluctant to get their hands full of paint, offer an alternative such as a brush, small sponge or cotton balls or tips.
- Use a kitchen spatula to scrape spread finger-paint back to the centre to start again.
- Have a bucket of lukewarm water and a towel handy for washing hands and cleaning up after.
- Keep paint away from small mouths and eyes if possible.
- Finger-paint can be kept in the fridge for a couple of days. If anyone using the paint is unwell, be aware of keeping germs and start fresh next time.

