

Especially for parents of infants!

Infant Finger Drawing

Scribbling and Drawing

Before a child can mark with a crayon or pencil, he can use his fingers to draw and “write.” This handout is filled with ideas for helping your baby learn pre-writing skills.

What is the practice?

A lot of fun activities can help infants learn to use their fingers to draw, paint, and scribble. These activities will help your child use his fingers to make interesting marks and scribbles.

What does the practice look like?

This type of writing happens any time your child uses his fingers to scribble or mark. Babies running their fingers through pudding or squeezing whipped cream between their fingers are examples of pre-writing activities.



How do you do the practice?

Finger paints aren't the only way to finger draw. All sorts of unusual “media” are perfect for finger drawing. Among them are dry rice, water, whipped cream, pudding, sand, play dough, and flour or cornmeal. Recipes for infant-safe, homemade “finger paints” can be found on the Web by searching **homemade finger paints**.

- Figure out which finger-drawing materials will be most interesting to your baby. “Messy” infants might love playing with pudding or whipped topping. “Tidy” infants are more likely to play happily with play dough or water. The more fun and enjoyable the activity is to your child, the more he will benefit from the activity.
- Find a place to do finger-drawing activities with your baby. “Finger painting” with whipped topping, pudding, or other foods can be done on a clean highchair tray. Try finger painting in the bathtub before your child's bath. “Painting” the sidewalk, deck, or other outdoor surface with water dripping from your child's fingers is fun and easy. And there's no need to clean up afterwards! A box with low sides can be a makeshift sandbox. Try filling it with flour or cornmeal instead of sand.
- Show your child how to use his fingers to “draw” by you making different types of marks and scribbles. Let your own enjoyment show! If you show you like the activity, chances are he will like it too!
- Show your child he did well by smiling and commenting on his efforts and successes. A little praise will go a long way in keeping your child playing. Try not to overdo it!

How do you know the practice worked?

- Is your child using his fingers more often to “draw” or “mark”?
- Does your child seem pleased about or intent on trying to mark?
- Has your child shown interest in trying to do different things with his hands and fingers?

Take a look at more infant finger drawing

Play Dough "Drawings"

Gloria is 1 year old. Her mother has found a fun way to let her daughter use her fingers to make her mark! She fills the baby's walker tray with play dough. Gloria pokes and squeezes it, enjoying the interesting shapes and marks she sees. Mom mashes two or three different colors of play dough to nearly fill the tray. She shows Gloria how to dig her fingers into the play dough. It did not take long for Gloria to develop her own way of drawing! She loves to push her fingers into the play dough and look at her "drawings." After doing this for a few times, she grabs a handful of play dough and squeezes it between her fingers. Gloria delights in seeing the play dough ooze out of her hands.



Making a Joyful Mess!

Sammy's middle name might as well be Messy! The more this busy 9-month-old can get into things, the happier he is. As soon as he can sit in the bathtub on his own, his mother introduces Sammy to finger paints. Before his bath, she smears finger paints on the tub bottom between Sammy's legs and in front of him. That's all it takes! He just loves to run his fingers through the paint and make big swooping motions back and forth. Sammy's mother joins in and adds different vocal sounds

to the hand motions. "Swoosh!" More and more, Sammy tries to repeat the sounds his mother makes and says a few of his own.

Getting the Feel of Things

Chip's parents know that their 9-month-old son will need to learn Braille when he gets older. Mom and Dad play drawing games to help Chip use his fingertips to "get the feel" of different textures. Chip's father seats him in his highchair. He gets him to reach into three bowls—one filled with rice, one with cornmeal, and one with water. Dad describes what Chip is doing. He waits for him to "tell him" what he is doing. Chip and his mother play a game of drawing in pudding on the highchair tray. Chip has figured out that he can make different kinds of effects. He often squeals and vocalizes with delight while drawing.

