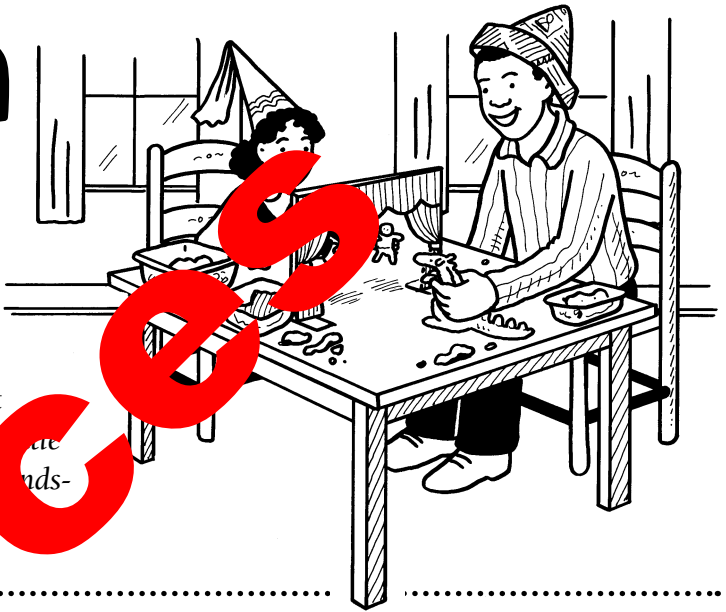


# Hands-On Learning



Have you ever watched your child examine a rock or a leaf while turning it over in her hands? Or use clay or paint to make letters, numbers, or shapes? She's learning the way we ones often learn best—by touching and creating. Here are hands-on activities that let her explore language, math, and science.

## PLAY DOUGH

This childhood staple is ideal for sensory learning fun. Use store-bought dough, or make your own. For each homemade batch, help your youngster mix together 1 cup flour,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup salt, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water. She could add food coloring to make different colors. Then, try these suggestions.

### Storytelling sculptures

Make up a story together, and create play-dough characters and props to go with it. Your child might begin a story about a cookie-eating dragon and make cookies and a dragon out of dough. You could add another dragon and ask her what happens next. (The dragon makes friends by sharing his cookies.) You'll encourage creativity and sharpen language skills that will be in handy when she writes stories.



### Number "snakes"

Your youngster will practice recognizing and using numbers with this activity. First, have him roll dough into "snakes" and shape them into numbers, 0–9. Then, choose a number (4), and ask him to make that number of objects, say, 4 "snakes." He can count the items as he sculpts them. Take turns until you have the correct number of objects for each particular number.

## FINGER PAINT

With finger paint, your child can not only paint pictures, but also write letters and words and experiment with textures. Invite her to get his hands messy with these activities.

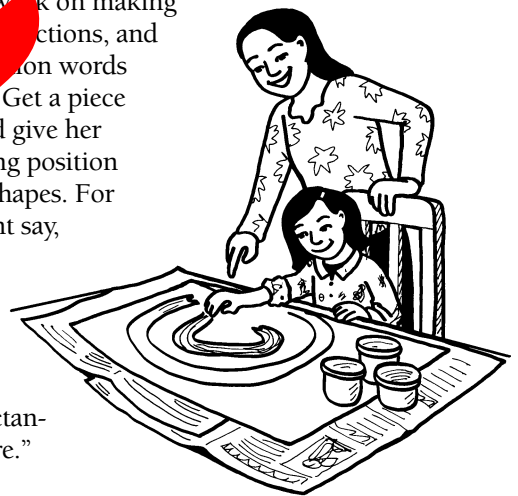
### Bathtub "graffiti"

Let your youngster finger paint on the sides of the bathtub to practice writing his ABCs. He could write a letter (*b*) and draw a picture of something that begins with that letter (*basketball*). Also, encourage him to try writing simple words like his name or words he has learned many times (*cat, stop*). *Note:* Always supervise your youngster when using water.

### Shape painting

Your child can work on making shapes, following directions, and understanding position words with finger paints. Get a piece of white paper, and give her instructions—using position words—to paint shapes. For example, you might say, "Paint a big circle.

Now, paint a triangle *inside* the circle. *Next* to the circle, paint a square. Add a rectangle *under* the square."



continued