



FINGER-PAINT MATH

Combining math with art is simple and fun! Follow these easy steps to make your own finger paint. Then join your youngster as you practice painting numbers and shapes.

Materials:

cornstarch
water
assorted food colors
1-pint deli containers with lids, one for each color
finger-paint paper (or plastic-coated freezer paper)
smocks or aprons
paper towels

Directions:

1. In a small saucepan, mix $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons cornstarch with 1 cup of water until smooth. (Invite your child to help you with the measurements!)
2. Add a food color. Stirring constantly, cook on low heat until the mixture is the thickness of pudding. Pour into a deli container. Cover when cool.
3. Repeat to make additional colors.
4. Place a piece of finger-paint paper on a table or countertop with the open paint containers nearby. Put on smocks. Invite your child to cover an area of the paper with finger paint, and then use a finger to make some fun shapes in the paint. The shapes will appear in white wherever your child draws. (Use the paper towels for finger wiping as needed.)
5. Ask: Can you make a shape for me to copy? Have your child make a shape and talk about it before you copy it. What does it look like? Copy the shape and, if your child is satisfied with your work, make your own shape -- a number or a simple geometric shape -- for your child to copy. Talk with your child about the shape you have made, what it is, and ask if it is difficult or easy to copy.
6. Use this back-and-forth sharing to give your child experience writing numbers and drawing geometric shapes such as triangles, rectangles, and circles.
7. For more painting fun, encourage your child to paint numbers and shapes with an elbow or a toe! You can also use household items such as a fork, comb, straw, bottle brush, or spatula to make interesting designs.

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FINGER-PAINT MATH (continued)

Parent Pointers:

- This activity helps with number and shape recognition.
- Store the paints in their covered containers in the refrigerator.
- Extension for older children: paint shape patterns -- for example, triangle, circle, square ... triangle, circle, square ... so you can each figure out what comes next in the pattern.
- Extension for younger children: Have them make a handprint, then count their fingers 1 to 5. Have them make footprints and count their toes!