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I Taught My Child Today…

by encouraging exploration of creative art materials.

Ideas to Promote Creative Art Exploration …

- Making some homemade playdough to squeeze, pound, roll, etc., as follows. Use:

1 cup of flour ½ cup of salt 1Tablespoon of vegetable oil
1 cup of water 1 teaspoon of cream of tartar

- Combine these ingredients in a pan and cook over medium heat stirring until the ingredients pull away from the sides of the pan to form a ball. Cool and store in an airtight container. Add small utensils such as cookie cutters to add to the fun.
- Scribbling with large crayons is a favorite pastime for little ones. Younger babies may need to have the corners of the paper taped down to the tabletop during creative art experiences. Little ones are very interested in trying to figure out just how the crayon works and what type of marks it can make.
- Finger painting is a sensory experience that both infants and toddlers enjoy. They like to feel the finger paint, move it around and see emerging patterns begin to stand out on the paper.
- Tearing paper to make a collage is a very exciting activity for babies. Use colored paper; brush on non-toxic glue with a paintbrush or Q-tip, then, press on the torn paper over the glue. Parents may offer hand-over-hand assistance or put on the glue for the youngest babies. Another great way to make a collage is by using clear contact paper. After the baby tears tissue paper, show the baby how to press the tissue paper on to the contact paper. When completed, cover it with second piece of contact paper for the baby. This is a very interesting sticky, tactile experience for infants and toddlers. It is helpful to tape the corners of the contact paper down during this activity.
- Painting with water and paint brushes outside on sidewalks and watching the water dry in the sunshine is great fun for little ones.

As parents encourage their little ones to explore various simple art mediums, they are again their child's first teacher. Parents soon learn that the process of exploring the art materials or the "process of doing" is more important than the finished product. The "doing" fuels the imagination and expression of their baby's personal and cultural uniqueness. Parents are teaching language development as conversations take place during activities. Fine muscle strength and dexterity, eye-hand coordination, creativity and more are learned. Parents enjoy watching and sometimes like to join in the exploration and fun at their child's side. It is always important to let the babies explore freely and be well supervised with child safety in mind. Infants and toddlers enjoy admiring their creative art displayed at eye level for days to

Resource: Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Education Department, 1295 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY, www.albrightknox.org or other local art galleries.

Infancy Leadership Circle/Erie:
A Project of New York Zero-to-Three Network —Raising Voices For Babies

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