



NC SEEDLING



Study to
Explore
Early
Development

North Carolina
SEED

**UNC-CH, Department
of Epidemiology**

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www.NCSEED.org

The Hierarchy of Finger Painting

Participating in a finger painting activity can help a child improve his self-awareness skills, fine/gross motor skills and eye/hand coordination. However, a child with autism may have sensory processing difficulties that may initially prevent him from participating in a finger painting activity. Children who have initial difficulty touching the paint with their hands may benefit from following a hierarchy system as described below:

- Place a blank piece of paper in a baking pan. Put a golf ball or toy car on top of the piece of paper. Pour a few drops

of paint into the pan. Have your child hold the side of the pan and move the pan around to watch the ball or car roll through the paint.

- Once your child gets comfortable having the ball or car roll through the paint you can advance to using:
 - ◇ A paint brush
 - ◇ Paint stampers
 - ◇ An eye dropper
 - ◇ A cotton swab
 - ◇ Paint sponges
 - ◇ A cotton ball
 - ◇ His fingers

It's a good idea to have a rag or paper towel close by so your child can wipe his hands whenever he wants to. Keep in mind that even painting a small dot is a big step for your child. Do not push your child and let him lead the session!



Hypersensitivity to Touch

For some children with autism the sense of touch can tend to be intense, overwhelming and confusing. A high level of hypersensitivity to touch can result in the child getting "stuck in" certain behaviors or motor patterns. The child could

also keep repeating a certain word or phrase, and may become unable to focus his or her attention if the tactile sensations become overwhelming. It's important to note that not every child with autism is hypersensitive to touch,

and children without autism can also have a hypersensitivity to touch.

This information is from a review of the article listed below:

Tomchek, S. D., & Dunn, W. (2007). Sensory processing in children with and without autism: A comparative study using the Short Sensory Profile. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 61, 190–200.

NOTES

- SEED has enrolled over 700 families; 100 from NC
- We have been enrolling for about 7 months!

