



# Paper Exploration



# Paper Exploration (What's Included!)

- Introduction to the Unit of Investigation
- Materials Needed for Activities
- Vocabulary Words
- Songs to Sing
- Books to Read
- Expanded Play & Experiential Learning
- 6 Activities (Including Materials Needed, Directions to Follow, and Targeted Learning Objectives)





# Introduction: Paper Exploration

Exploring paper offers numerous developmental benefits for infants, fostering their growth in a holistic and integrated manner. Engaging with paper is not merely a sensory activity; it is an enriching experience that nurtures their creativity, cognitive development, and fine motor skills. Infants delight in the tactile sensations of paper, with its different textures—smooth, rough, thin, and thick—stimulating their sense of touch and enhancing their perceptual skills.

Manipulating paper helps develop fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination through actions such as grasping crayons, turning pages, and folding. These small movements strengthen the muscles in their fingers and hands, laying the groundwork for future tasks like writing. Additionally, gross motor skills are engaged when infants use larger arm movements to reach, crumple, or spread out sheets of paper. Paper serves as a blank canvas, allowing infants to express themselves through drawing and coloring while understanding symbolism and representation, which are foundational for later literacy and numeracy skills.

When administering activities, it's important to re-offer the same activities several times over. This allows children the opportunity to make deep connections, comprehend uses and properties, while contributing to mastery and memory recall. And keep in mind that learning is not confined to a specific time, place, or activity. It's an ongoing journey where connections are woven through daily interactions and engagement with the people, places, and materials that surround us.





## Materials

Our suggested list of materials are items that will supplement the activities and experiences in your packet.

- 1 pack of construction paper
- 1 roll of butcher paper
- Coloring materials (crayons, markers, paint, etc.)
- 1 pack of tissue paper
- About 2 empty paper towel/toilet paper rolls
- 1 full toilet paper/paper towel roll (you can roll it back up after play to repurpose)
- 1 Large cardboard box (big enough for your child to sit inside and/or crawl into) - You can always use more if you have!
- Optional for cardboard box play: string lights and acrylic mirrors)
- 1 medium-sized shallow basket to create & fill "Treasure Baskets"



# Vocabulary Words

New & relative vocabulary words to incorporate in everyday experiences: In addition to incorporating the vocabulary words provided below, try to speak as you go! Talking to children as you go is one of the most powerful ways to expand upon receptive and expressive language development. The more language children are exposed to (when used in meaningful and relative context) the greater it contributes to language and future literacy skills.

- |           |          |             |            |
|-----------|----------|-------------|------------|
| • Paper   | • Line   | • Black     | • Scribble |
| • Book    | • Dot    | • Blue      | • Erase    |
| • Page    | • Fold   | • Red       | • Glue     |
| • Pencil  | • Tear   | • Green     | • Cut      |
| • Crayon  | • Sheet  | • Yellow    | • Paste    |
| • Draw    | • Smooth | • Circle    | • Rip      |
| • Color   | • Rough  | • Square    | • Torn     |
| • Write   | • Thin   | • Triangle  | • Cut      |
| • Picture | • Thick  | • Rectangle | • Roll     |
| • Shape   | • White  | • Print     | • Bend     |



# Songs to Sing

Singing with children is a multifaceted tool for development, enhancing language skills through exposure to varied vocabulary and rhythms. The rhythmic and melodic nature aids memory, making learning engaging. Beyond cognitive benefits, singing promotes emotional expression, fostering a holistic growth experience.

## Rip the Paper

*(Sang to the Tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")*

Rip the paper, tear it small,  
Watch the pieces gently fall.  
Roll it up and scrunch it tight,  
Crumple, crumple with delight.  
Rip, tear, roll, and scrunch,  
Playing with paper is so much fun!

Fold the paper, make a crease,  
Open it up, then repeat.  
Wave it high and wave it low,  
See the paper flutter so.  
Rip, tear, roll, and scrunch,  
Playing with paper is so much fun!

Rip, tear, roll, and scrunch,  
Playing with paper is so much fun!  
Fold, shake, wave, and fly,  
Paper play, oh my, oh my!

## Mr. Sun by Raffi

Oh, Mister Sun, Sun, Mister Golden Sun,  
Please shine down on me. Oh,  
Mister Sun, Sun, Mister Golden Sun,  
Hiding behind a tree.  
These little children are asking you,  
To please come out so we can play with you.  
Oh, Mister Sun, Sun, Mister Golden Sun,  
Please shine down on me.

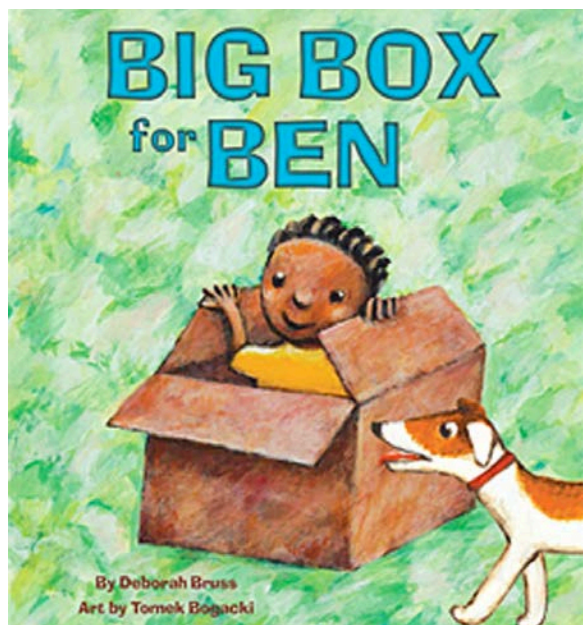
**Disclaimer: We Skoolhouse does not own the lyrics to any of the songs provided.**



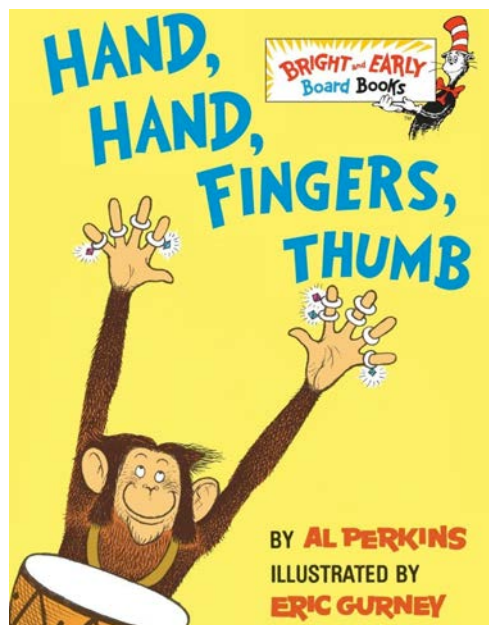


# Books to Read

We select two books to support your unit of investigation - it's important to go slow and re-read the same books several times for greater comprehension and connection building. You can read the recommended book before they begin the hands-on work. We understand all children have different preferences and interests when it comes to books (and everything else), so please find our supplemental reads that can replace or add to the suggested books below:

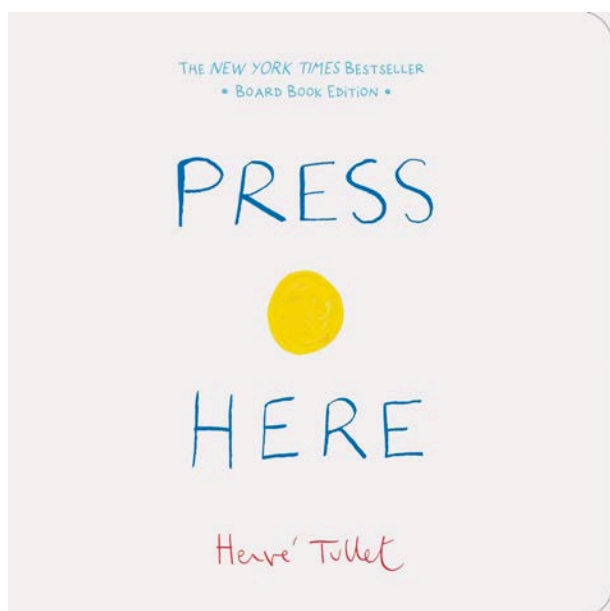


**Big Box, by Deborah Bruss**

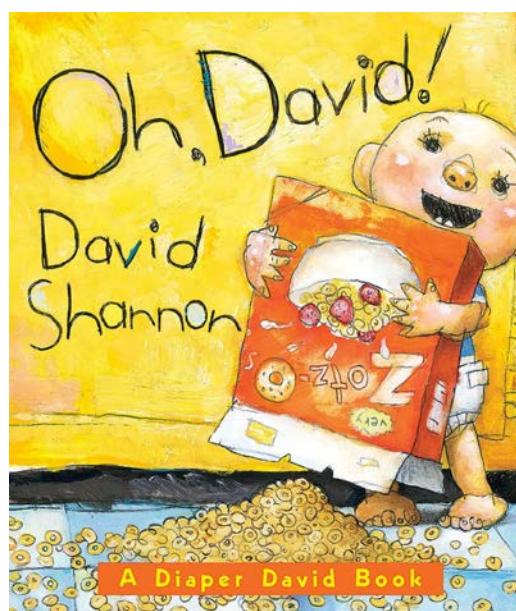


**Hand, Hand, Fingers, Thumb, by Al Perkins**

## Supplemental Reads:



**Press Here, by Herve Tullet**



**Oh, David! by David Shannon**

# Expanded Play & Experiential Learning

Learning concepts are best adopted when children can make everyday and tangible connections. Support your child's emergent knowledge and experiences by incorporating the topic in different areas of play and exploration.

- **Paper Play**

- **Combine paper with another toy;** (empty) paper towel roll and a ball, or sheet of paper and a ball. Babies may begin to combine these materials to see what they can do (e.g. hit the ball with the paper roll or balance the ball on top of the paper roll).
- **Empty Paper Roll Play:** A great way to up-cycle and learn! Empty paper rolls can be rolled, looked through, stacked up, etc.
- **Paper Peek-a-Boo:** Use sheets of paper to play peek-a-boo, encouraging social interaction and cognitive development.



- **Exploring Books**

- **Exploring books** of different covers; board books, paperbacks, and hardcovers.
  - While we don't expect to infants to think more deeply about the textures and compare them, we encourage the practice of being descriptive in everyday context to build language and cognition!



# ACTIVITIES





# Paper Exploration

## MATERIALS

- 1 Basket (to hold paper)
- Recommended Materials:
  - About 2-3 empty toilet paper/paper towel rolls
  - One partial or full roll of toilet paper
  - A few sheets of construction paper
  - A few sheets of tissue paper

## DIRECTIONS

- Add all paper products to the basket and let them explore! Model some different actions that will prompt their curiosity & participation:
  - Begin to slowly rip the paper
  - You can say "Listen!" to bring attention to the sound of ripping paper, while they watch your rip!
  - Empty toilet paper roll:
    - Sing through rolls
    - Look through rolls
    - Use rolls like drumsticks
    - Stuff rolls with shredded paper
    - Pull paper out from stuffed rolls
    - Play Peek-a-Boo with the paper
    - Roll it up into a ball, throw it, "roll it," etc.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- **Sensory Exploration:** Children will develop sensory awareness through tactile exploration of different types of paper, including smooth, rough, crinkly, and textured varieties. They will explore the auditory properties of paper by crumpling, tearing, and manipulating it to create sounds.
- **Cause and Effect Exploration:** Children will begin to understand cause and effect relationships by observing how their actions, such as crumpling or tearing paper, produce specific outcomes, such as changes in shape or sound.
- **Temporal Concepts:** Engaging in activities like tearing paper into pieces and then attempting to put them back together introduces infants to concepts of before and after, supporting their understanding of temporal relationships.
- **Motor Skills:** Through activities such as tearing, crumpling, and folding paper, infants will refine their fine motor skills, including hand-eye coordination, finger dexterity, and precision in hand movements. Engaging in gross motor activities like crawling over or climbing on paper structures will strengthen core muscles, improve balance, and enhance overall physical coordination and control, supporting holistic motor development.





# Cardboard Box Fun

## MATERIALS

- 1 large cardboard box
  - Can add more if space allots, making a longer "tunnel."
- Optional Additions:
  - Poke holes in the top and string lights through
  - Add tissue paper to the bottom for a crinkly sound as they sit/move/crawl
  - Hang paper strips from the top or sides to prompt pulling/ripping
  - Add an acrylic mirror to the inside
  - Add a couple of books to create a cozy nook

## DIRECTIONS

- Add a large cardboard box to your play space, big enough for them to sit in and/or crawl through.
- Start simple - just let them explore, then on other days you can gradually add some things.
- Allow children to independently explore for as long as they're interested. You can then engage in some games with them, such as "peek-a-boo" by opening and closing the box flaps and/or crawling through with them if space permits.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- **Social Emotional:** Engaging with the box allows children to make choices about how to interact with it, fostering autonomy and self-regulation as they navigate their play experiences. Engaging in playful activities with children, such as exploring a cardboard box together, creates joyful moments that strengthen the emotional bond between you. This shared experience provides a sense of security for your child, knowing that they have your support and presence during exploration and discovery.
- **Cognition:** Playing peek-a-boo or hiding games with the box helps children grasp the concept of object permanence, as they learn that objects continue to exist even when they are temporarily out of sight. Crawling under, climbing over, or moving through the box helps children understand spatial relationships and prepositions, such as inside, outside, on top, under, and through, enhancing their spatial awareness and language skills.
- **Motor:** Manipulating the box—whether tearing, folding, crawling through, or climbing on top—engages both fine and gross motor skills, promoting coordination, balance, and strength. Navigating in and around the box requires children to visually perceive their environment and make spatial judgments, enhancing their visual perception and spatial awareness as they interact with the physical world.
- **Language Development:** As children hear and process words associated with the box, such as ripping, tearing, pulling, and squeezing, their receptive language skills are strengthened. They learn to recognize and understand these words in context, expanding their vocabulary and comprehension.



# Colored Paper Collage

## MATERIALS

- Paper (construction paper, tissue paper, colored paper, textured paper).
- Non-toxic glue sticks or glue
- Large sheet of craft paper or a sturdy cardboard base

## DIRECTIONS

- Set up a large sheet of craft paper or a sturdy cardboard base on a flat surface where children can easily reach.
- You may add some glue to the surface of the base so children can explore the feeling of glue and experiment with placing pieces over the sticky surface.
- Allow the children to explore the different types of paper and experiment with placing them on the collage.
- Please note, we do not expect babies to pick up the pieces and add them to the base - this experience is meant to provide paper and glue for individualized sensory exploration. Some babies may want to just feel the glue, some babies may want to crumble paper, some babies may not be interested in any of these materials. There is no right or wrong, but rather, think of this as an invitation to explore and experiment.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- **Sensory Exploration:** Children will explore the different textures and colors of the various types of paper, enhancing their sensory awareness and providing visual and tactile stimulation. Handling the glue provides an additional sensory experience. Children will feel the sticky texture of the glue, which helps them understand different material properties and enhances their tactile exploration.
- **Motor Development:** Picking up small pieces of paper and applying glue requires precise finger movements and hand control. This activity strengthens the small muscles in their hands and fingers, improving their ability to perform tasks requiring fine motor skills. Coordinating their hand movements with their visual focus as they place paper pieces onto the collage helps refine their hand-eye coordination, essential for many daily tasks and future academic skills.
- **Cognition:** Children will observe how applying glue to paper pieces allows them to stick to the base paper, reinforcing their understanding of cause and effect. They learn that their actions directly influence the outcomes they see. As they figure out how much glue to use and where to place the paper pieces, children engage in problem-solving and decision-making, essential cognitive skills.





# Paper Ball Toss

## MATERIALS

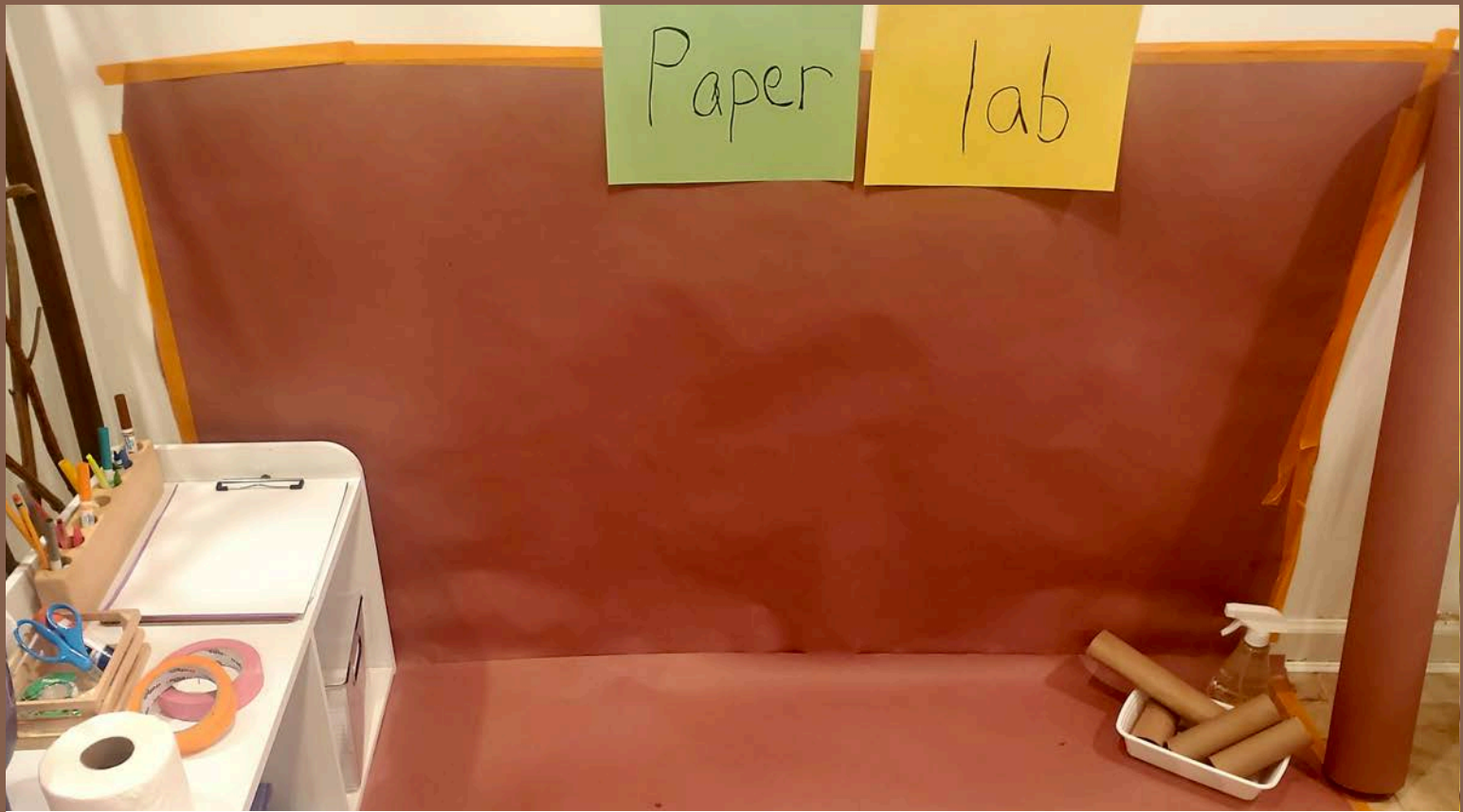
- Sheets of paper
- Small bin/container

## DIRECTIONS

- Crumple a sheet of paper or two into balls and have infants toss them into a designated container,
- Depending on your child's age and stage of development, you can model the crumple the sheets of paper and see if they try to do the same.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- **Fine Motor Skills:** Children will practice using their fingers and hands to grasp the paper balls securely before tossing them towards the basket. This action helps strengthen their finger muscles and improves their grip, contributing to fine motor skill development. By visually tracking the trajectory of the paper balls and adjusting their aim accordingly, children enhance their hand-eye coordination. This skill is crucial for tasks requiring precise movements and visual feedback.
- **Gross Motor Skills:** Engaging in tossing motions involves using the muscles in the arms and shoulders to propel the paper balls towards the target. Regular practice of such movements helps children develop upper body strength and muscle control. Executing throwing actions while maintaining balance requires coordination between different muscle groups and body parts. Children improve their coordination and balance as they adjust their posture and movements to achieve accurate throws.
- **Spatial Awareness:** Children gain an understanding of spatial concepts such as distance and direction as they aim their tosses towards the basket. They learn to judge the distance between themselves and the target and adjust their throwing force and angle accordingly. Through trial and error, children refine their ability to aim the paper balls towards the target with increasing accuracy. This skill involves spatial perception and estimation, essential for various daily tasks and activities.



# Paper Lab

## MATERIALS

- Large sheets of paper (butcher paper, craft paper, or large roll paper)
- Non-toxic, washable crayons and markers
- Masking tape or painter's tape (safe for walls)

## DIRECTIONS

- Tape large sheets of paper securely to the walls at various heights, ensuring some sheets are placed low enough for children to reach comfortably while sitting or crawling.
- Cover the floor with additional large sheets of paper and secure them with tape to prevent slipping.
- Provide a variety of non-toxic, washable crayons and markers. Ensure they are easy for small hands to grasp.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- **Sensory Exploration:** Children will explore different textures (smooth paper, rough walls) and see how different colors appear on various surfaces, enhancing their sensory awareness. Handling and moving the crayons and markers provides a kinesthetic learning experience, engaging children in physical activity while they explore sensory input.
- **Fine Motor Skills Development:** Using crayons and markers helps children develop their grip and control, strengthening the small muscles in their hands and fingers, essential for future writing skills. Coordinating their hand movements with their visual focus while coloring helps refine their hand-eye coordination.
- **Gross Motor Skills Enhancement:** Encouraging children to reach across their bodies to draw on different parts of the wall or floor paper helps them practice crossing the midline, a critical skill for bilateral coordination. Moving between different positions (standing, sitting, crawling) while coloring promotes overall physical coordination, balance, and spatial awareness.
- **Spatial Awareness and Perspective:** Coloring from various positions (standing, sitting, lying down) allows children to explore spatial awareness and understand different perspectives. Children will gain an understanding of spatial concepts such as up, down, side-to-side, and near-far as they move around the "Paper Lab."
- **Cause and Effect Learning:** Children will learn about cause and effect by observing how their actions (moving the crayon or marker) result in visible marks and lines on the paper. As they navigate drawing on vertical and horizontal surfaces, children engage in problem-solving and adaptive thinking.





# Paper Roll Stampers

## MATERIALS

- Empty paper towel rolls (cut into shorter lengths if needed)
- Washable, non-toxic paint in various colors
- Large sheets of paper or craft paper
- Optional: Newspaper or a protective covering for the workspace

## DIRECTIONS

- Cut paper towel rolls into shorter lengths for stampers. Set up a protected workspace with paper and paint.
- Show infants how to dip stampers into paint and press onto paper. Encourage exploration and experimentation with colors and stamping.
- Praise infants' efforts (e.g. "you worked hard!" "you used a lot of green," etc.) and display finished artwork for them to admire.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- **Sensory Sensory Exploration:** Children will explore the tactile sensations of paint as they dip their fingers or stampers into the paint and spread it onto the paper. They will also experience the visual stimulation of vibrant colors and patterns emerging on the paper.
- **Fine Motor Skills Development:** By grasping and manipulating the paper towel roll stampers, children will strengthen their fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination. This activity encourages them to practice precise movements and control as they create patterns and designs.
- **Gross Motor Skills Enhancement:** Children will engage in gross motor movements as they reach, bend, and twist to dip their stampers into the paint and apply them to the paper. This activity promotes coordination, balance, and spatial awareness.
- **Creativity and Expression:** Children will express their creativity and individuality through the process of painting or stamping. They will experiment with different colors, shapes, and stamping techniques, developing their artistic skills and self-expression.
- **Cause and Effect Learning:** Children will learn about cause and effect as they observe how pressing the paint-covered stampers onto the paper creates patterns and designs. They will discover that their actions result in visible outcomes, promoting cognitive understanding and curiosity.
- **Social and Emotional Development:** Engaging in artistic activities promotes social interaction and emotional expression. Children may enjoy painting alongside caregivers or peers, fostering a sense of connection and belonging. This shared experience encourages cooperation, communication, and positive interactions.



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