

# Activities to encourage learning through play.



## Mess-free canvas art

Dab a few different colours of paint on a canvas, wrap it in cling film and let child push the paint around with their fingers. This little craft is safe and an easy clean up.

Canvases are often available in supermarket at reasonable cost.

- *Useful language and Lámh signs to use are; colours, more*

## Hand and foot painting

Body awareness - The feeling of the cool paint on their hands and feet is a fun new sensation for toddlers. Before you start, be prepared and have a bowl of warm soapy water and a towel ready beside the painting area.

The clean up can be as much fun as painting!

- *Useful language and Lámh signs to use are; wet, dry, cold, hot, tickle, again, wait, colours*

## Mess-free painting

Fill a plastic zip lock bag with some different types of paint, seal it up after releasing as much air as you can, tape it to the highchair tabletop, tray, floor or table... and let child push the paint around. Again be prepared in case of any accidents. Have a bowl of warm soapy water and a towel ready to wash your hands afterwards

- *Useful language and Lámh signs to use are; colours, more*

## Water bottle shakers

Take an empty water bottle and then fill it with lentils, pasta, rice, etc. Tape the cap on to be extra safe. Shake, shake, shake in rhythm to the music.

- *Useful language and Lámh signs to use are; listen, shake, noisy, sssh, quiet, again*

### **Paper towel roll chute**

Tape a cardboard paper towel roll to the wall and show your child how to drop cotton balls into it. Catch them in a bowl underneath. Repeat.

- *Useful language and Lámh signs to use are; in, out again*

### **Busy basket/ Treasure basket**

Fill a basket with odds and ends from home such as wooden blocks, baby-safe kitchen utensils, for example; a whisk, music makers - maracas, a lemon, lime or an orange, kitchen scrubs soft and rough, hair brush, tooth brush, a book, a leather purse, anything that you can safely leave with a young child. Try to include as many non plastic textures as possible.

Your job is to sit back and observe your baby at play, touching and exploring each item. Do your best **NOT** to comment or interfere - just watch quietly. Watch their reactions to different textures. You will see their preferences or dislikes.

### **Sensory rice play**

Fill an empty tub with dry rice and let them dig around with fingers, spoons and scoops. You can hide toys in there too. (Just be sure, to keep a close eye so they don't eat any of the uncooked rice.)

- *Useful language and Lámh signs to use are; more, spoon, object words*

### **Spaghetti play**

Boil some spaghetti/noodles, cool and let child play with them. Add a little olive oil or butter to stop the spaghetti from sticking.

- *Useful language and Lámh signs to use are; again, more, go*

### **Mini sandbox**

Fill an empty tub with sand, a few toys, shells, or anything else your child might like. This is great for the indoors especially in the cooler months. (Just put a waterproof sheet or towel beneath the tub to help with clean-up.)



### **Fine Motor activities**

#### **Stringing pipe cleaners**

Poke holes in an old egg carton and stick the pipe cleaners in it to make loops. Child can pull these out, place them back in and so forth.

- *Useful language and Lámh signs to use are; in, out, more, on, off*

#### **Cereal bird feeders**

With assistance let your child string some Cheerios onto a pipe cleaner and create a little bird feeder to hang from a tree. This activity is a challenging one to develop fine motor skills. Brothers and sisters may need to help!

- *Useful language and Lámh signs to use are; help, more, on, next, "WHO IS EATING ALL THE CHEERIOS?"*

#### **Hide toys in playdough**

Use an old Connect 4 game or something similar. Hide the "coins" in the play dough (maybe peeping out to get started). Model how to pull them out using your index finger and thumb. When you have found one or all, post it into the connect four, a post box or a money box.

If play dough is too difficult now, try hiding them in a big bowl of rice.



## People games

### Post it note Family peek-a-boo game

Print off some pictures of family members. Stick them on a board or card. Put a sticky note over the top. Then encourage baby to play "peek-a-boo" with the relatives!

or

Knock, knock who's there? Lift the flap - its Daddy!

You can incorporate Lámh signs by also signing the relative Mammy, Daddy, Granny, Grandad..

- *Useful language and Lámh signs to use are: look, open, family names*

### Singing together

Singing together is one of the best ways to develop communication and language skills. You can do it anywhere, at home, in the car, on the bus, Face to face is best, with your child sitting on your knee or on the floor sing some nursery rhymes. You can include action songs like Row, row, row your boat, Horsey, horsey don't you stop, to create a connection and a sense of anticipation for the scream or the drop.

Favourite songs from musicals are great too! This also a great way to get some Lámh signing opportunities in the most natural way

*To refresh your Lámh skills- Talk to your Home Teacher, or SLT, or check your Lámh book or online @ [www.lamhsigns.org](http://www.lamhsigns.org)*

**Most importantly have fun!**