

Create a Tactile Masterpiece

By the time your child enters kindergarten, he has probably painted with his fingers, paintbrushes, and sponges. How does the painting process change if he uses a flower? Does a blade of grass make the same stroke as a paintbrush? This activity lets your child discover the answers while creating a sensational tactile masterpiece!

What You Need:

- Paper
- Paint
- Flat dishes
- Bag
- Found objects



What You Do:

1. Take a nature walk with your child. Give her a bag for collecting objects along the way and explain that you are going to see what interesting objects you can find, then paint a picture with them.
2. During your walk, help your kindergartener look for objects that will make a good "paintbrush." They need to be small enough for your child to hold in his hand and dip into a dish of paint.
3. A blade of grass, a flower, and a twig are just a few items that may find their way into your child's bag. Make sure that your child does not choose any plants that are potentially harmful.
4. When you are finished with your walk, set up a paint station with a large piece of paper and flat dishes filled with several colors of paint.
5. Your child should dip the objects she found into the paint and apply them to the paper.
6. As your kindergartener paints, ask, "Do all of these things paint the same way?" Point out the different spots and say, "You painted here with a flower and here with a leaf." Ask, "Do they look the same? How are they different?"
7. When the paint has dried, allow your child to feel over the surface of the painting. Ask, "How does it feel? Is it smooth or bumpy? What object made the smooth part? What object made the bumpy part?"
8. This project can be done again and again as your child thinks of new "paintbrushes" she can use.

Set up your own museum with a gallery of your child's paintings. Create a card for each masterpiece with your child's name and a list of the items used in the painting's creation. Invite the rest of your family to the museum's opening night party!