

## TANDEM PAINTING

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Often we, as adults, think of play as board games or video games. While this play may have its place in our children's lives, play with attachment in mind looks and feels a little different. This is one of those activities.

For this activity, you will need non-toxic, washable finger paint (Crayola makes one), or pre-made pudding. A table cover might be useful and finger paint paper is the best to have but any large sheet of paper will do. Oh yes, last but not least, a little spirit of adventure never hurts.

Tell your child that you have learned a new painting technique and ask him/her if he/she will help you try it out. Set up your paint station while you explain that you have learned that it can be very interesting to do a painting using someone's else's hand rather than a brush (and possibly pudding rather than paint) and you would like to start with using your child's hand as the paint brush. Let your child know that if all goes well, you are willing to be your child's paint brush for a second painting.

The key to this activity is to help your child relax and enjoy your touch and lead as well as giving you a chance to follow his/her lead when you become the paint brush. Try not to talk during the painting itself – use your eyes, smiles and nods to communicate your pleasure and guidance. See if your child can mirror this when he/she is the artist.

This play involves touch and movement and often includes smiles as well as laughter.

Things to notice about your child during this play:

- How well does he/she tolerate your lead – can he/she relax hand and arm to let you paint?
- How well does your child tolerate the texture of the paint or pudding – should you be curious about other sensory issues?
- How well does your child engage in the non-verbal eye contact and gestures?
- How well does your child mirror your engagement when he/she takes a turn as the artist?

Sometimes it takes repeated instances of this play to maximize the comfort and connection.



Pathways to  
Permanence 2

Parenting  
Children  
Who Have  
Experienced  
Trauma  
AND LOSS

Session 5

Creating  
Positive  
Attachments  
Part 2

Parent's  
Toolbox