

GAME 40 Avant-Garde Painting

Indoor/Outdoor

- Indoor

Equipment

- Small carrot sticks, corn kernels, peas, leaf from a tree, twine to use as painting utensils
- Finger paint
- Large, light-colored poster board

How

- Choose one of the larger painting utensils mentioned in Equipment (e.g., carrot sticks).
- Instruct the child to paint something you suggest (e.g., tree, person).
- Instruct the child to paint whatever interests her. If the child needs suggestions, you can tell her or show her suggested objects (e.g., geometric shapes).
- Cycle through the other painting utensils listed in Equipment, going from largest to smallest (carrot sticks to peas).

Purpose

- **Pincer grasp:** To grasp the painting utensils, especially the smaller ones, your child will need to use a pincer grasp.
- **Thumb-to-finger opposition:** Careful control of the painting utensil promotes controlled thumb-to-finger opposition.
- **Tactile input:** Touching the various utensils gives a plethora of tactile experiences.
- **Shoulder mobility:** Since this activity is done on a poster board, it encourages large drawings, which requires the painting to originate in the shoulder area.

WHY Activities that promote a functional tripod grip on a writing utensil will have lasting positive impacts for academic-type activities. Control of writing instruments can be a very difficult task for children who have sensory processing difficulties, so this activity is encouraging children to use writing-type instruments with increased success and a more mature grip on crayons, pencils, and pens that they will use in the school setting. A tripod grip consists of holding a pencil with the pad of the thumb and tip of the pointer finger, and slightly resting on the middle finger. All fingers are bent with even pressure distributed among the three fingers. A tripod grip allows the child to write more quickly and easily while decreasing fatigue to the hand and wrist.