



GADGET PAINTING

Materials you need:

- Old potato mashers, forks, other interesting gadgets with a surface flat enough for stamping—I get mine from op shops and markets.
- Damp kitchen sponges in trays or on plates.
- Thick craft paint (2 colours works well).
- Recycled wrapping paper, newspaper, computer paper or cardboard.

Setup for play:

- Pour a little paint onto the damp sponges and spread around with a spoon (you can just pour onto some plates or lids but the sponges save a lot of paint waste with toddlers!)
- Show the toddlers how to press the potato mashers and other gadgets into the paint sponges then stamp onto their paper to create colourful patterns.
- You can include babies in this activity by letting them feel and squish a sponge pad with paint. You can also introduce a potato masher or other interesting gadgets in a basket for them to explore.

What are they learning with this activity?

As the children use the gadgets to stamp and create marks they are learning to:

- Listen to and follow directions
- Use hand/eye coordination skills and demonstrate spatial awareness
- Express themselves creatively with printing methods
- Create with different mediums and textures
- Strengthen fine motor muscles, visual motor integration and control
- Challenge their sense of touch and sensory processing
- Use their sense of touch, sight and smell to make choices and create
- Manipulate equipment and real life tools with increasing competence
- How to make marks and patterns
- Strengthen gross motor skills and balance.
- Increase their attention span.

Extending the play:

- Try plunger painting—easy for little hands to hold and helps strengthens coordination and wrist muscles as they press and stamp to make circles.
- Flyswatter painting is another press and stamp favourite. Show toddlers how to use both hands to press the flyswat firmly into the paint pad then swat the paper well. This one is best done outside as they use a lot of energy swatting!
- Add the potato mashers and other gadgets to the playdough or clay table for more imprinting fun.
- Add to a water tub and experiment with what floats and what doesn't. Scoop out with the flyswatters.

