

Mind

nobody's perfect

Surround Your Child with Chances to Learn

- **You can help build your child's brain by talking to him.** Talk to your baby right from the beginning. Talk about what you are doing and what he is doing. Describe the things he sees and hears around him. When your child begins to speak, listen to what he says. Encourage your child to talk about things that happen to him. Take turns talking and listening.
- **Read and tell stories every day.** You can look at picture books with your baby and talk about what you see. Children can learn about things from books that they do not see in their daily life. Tell your toddler stories about what you did during the day.
- **Share your stories, songs and rhymes.** Talk about your culture, beliefs, traditions, and values.
- **Give your child a variety of materials to play with.** Children's toys do not need to be expensive. You have lots of things in the house that are fun to play with. Here are some ideas: empty plastic containers and bottles, plastic measuring cups and bowls, cardboard tubes and empty boxes.
- You can make different colours of play dough for your child. In the winter, bring some snow inside in a dish pan. Check everything you give your child to make sure it is clean and safe.
- **Play outdoors.** Children can do things outdoors that they cannot do in your home. Your child will enjoy outdoor play in any weather. Play in the sandbox at the park. Play in the snow. Splash in puddles when it is raining. Take your child to a wading pool or to a beach.

i **Your child's brain is growing. You can help by talking to him, playing with him, and reading to him.**



For more information about *Nobody's Perfect*, or to download this document, please search "Nobody's Perfect Tipsheets" on Canada.ca.



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Fun & Easy Activities

Play Dough

Play dough encourages children to be creative. They can create whatever shape they want. They can push different tools into it to make different patterns and textures. They develop control of their fingers and hand muscles. When they get older, they can make little people and animals to play with. Some children find that playing with play dough helps calm them down.

You can give play dough to your child as soon as she stops wanting to eat it. For some children, this is around 12 months. For other children, it might not be till age 2 ½. Your child will enjoy playing with play dough for many years.

Here is a recipe for homemade play dough. Look for cream of tartar in the spice section in a grocery store or bulk food store.

1. Mix together in a pot:
 - 1 cup flour (250 ml)
 - 1/4 cup salt (60 ml)
 - 2 tablespoons cream of tartar (30 ml)
2. Add to the mixed ingredients in the pot:
 - 1 cup water (250 ml)
 - a few drops of food colouring
 - 1 tablespoon oil (15 ml)
3. Stir everything together and cook over medium heat for a few minutes.
4. When the mixture is warm and makes a lump in the pot, scrape it out onto a counter and knead until smooth.
5. Store in a plastic container in the fridge.

Sidewalk Drawings

Sidewalk chalk is not expensive and can give your child hours of fun. Some children as young as 1 year old can hold chalk and make marks. However most children this young just want to put the chalk in their mouth. Just in case, look for chalk that is non-toxic.

By the time they are around 2 years old, most children are able to draw with chalk on the sidewalk. They can make lots of drawings and never run out of space!

