

Let's paint a picture !

Initially children will feel, taste, smell and explore the texture of paint between their fingers. Gradually they learn the names of the colours and learn how to mix the different colours. Over time and lots of repetition the child will be able to mix paint to the consistency that he/she needs to paint, learning the names of the primary colours. Then using this knowledge the child will be able to mix paint to reach the specific shade or tone needed for their painting.

Painting with the body remains an important part of the experience of paint throughout nursery, with hands, fingers, feet. Creativity begins with the confidence to explore and enjoy the materials.

As children's control and their planning develop, this is matched by the provision of small and delicate brushes alongside big chunky ones, and opportunities to observe closely and remain involved in painting for periods of time. The process of creating (with paint or any other material) is what matters, not the product: so children are not guided into producing identical daffodil paintings with the same shades of yellow and green, but they are encouraged to enjoy and respond to objects, and express themselves using the materials freely. Mixing paints with increasing control extends children's scientific understanding, for example of what happens when different colours are combined, and it can support their growing sense of their identity as they mix the colours they need to paint their hair, eye and skin colours.

Painting and colour-mixing as a context for development and learning in the EYFS

Painting and colour mixing supports children's **personal, social and emotional development** by providing opportunities to show curiosity, develop new skills, develop confidence and autonomy, make choices and sometimes become involved for long periods of time. In painting themselves and friends, children can enhance their self-confidence (e.g. about appearance, hair, eye and skin colour) and feeling of belonging.

Painting and colour mixing also help children's developing **communication, language and literacy** as they vocalise, make sounds, talk about what they are doing and collaborate with others. Children will sometimes negotiate as they paint on a large scale together and talk about their ideas. When learning about mixing colours, children will need to listen carefully and follow instructions, and as their competence develops they may talk about what they are doing and what they observe. Painting with fingers, feet, hands and brushes enables children to make marks and to talk about the different marks and what they stand for. Children can use brushes and tools with increasing control, making lines and circles and starting to draw letter-like shapes and conventional letters.

Children can develop their **problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy** by exploring quantity as they paint, covering space and making shapes. They may paint an intended number of objects and count these, and represent size and position in their painting. When mixing colours, they will need to solve problems involving quantity in order to make the colour they want.

Painting and colour-mixing are also contexts for children to expand their **knowledge and understanding of the world**, exploring materials (paint, brushes and other tools, paper and other materials to paint on) with all their senses. Whilst painting, children can observe changes, including how the paper becomes damp, how paint behaves when it is thicker and thinner, how different techniques of applying paint have different results, and how colours change when mixed.

Their **physical development** is enhanced with opportunities to develop large and small motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination using their whole body, hands, feet, fingers, and tools including brushes.

Their **creative development** is supported as they enjoy and respond to experiences by painting, enjoying the texture of the paint and paper, making different types of movements, shapes and representations on large and small scales and carefully differentiating and mixing colours.