

## Exploration

*“Infants and toddlers must be able to explore to learn how their world works.”*  
~Sara Smith, Idaho Infant Toddler Program Developmental Specialist, Boise, Idaho

### ***I explore my environment to learn about:***

- my caregivers and other people. My favorite thing to explore as an infant is the human face.
- my body and myself. I may do this by mouthing, sitting, moving, etc.
- the world around me, like nature, people, animals, and objects.
- solving problems. I'm also learning how objects work (cause and effect) and new ways to use them.
- how to use language and my body to communicate.
- new skills I've learned, like dumping, throwing, and scooping.
- my senses: taste, touch, smell, sight, and hearing.
- what I'm interested in and need to learn more about.



### ***My caregivers can help me explore by:***

- using encouraging responses like smiling, nodding, and asking questions.
- giving me opportunities to learn about myself using pictures and mirrors.
- giving me time to explore different things without forcing me. It may take time before I will touch materials that feel different.
- offering open-ended materials daily, such as sand, water, play dough, blocks, and finger paints.
- providing different places to explore: small spaces, different surfaces and levels, indoors and outdoors.
- talking with me about the things I explore and how I explore them.
- giving me time to think when exploring before you try to help.
- providing a variety of sensory objects, such as soft, hard, rough, smooth, fuzzy, or loud.
- watching me to figure out what new skills I am working on. Provide ways for me to explore that will encourage those skills.
- ensuring that my environment is safe.

#### **Play Dough Recipe**

1 cup of flour

½ cup salt

1 cup water

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

2 teaspoons cream of tartar

*Combine all ingredients in pan and stir.  
Heat on medium/high heat and  
continue to stir until ingredients form  
a ball. Knead together on a lightly  
floured surface and add food coloring.*

*To learn more about exploration, view the Resources and References found at the end of these materials.*