

Especially for practitioners working with infants!

Touch-and-Feel Books

Print Awareness and Reading

Infants love to reach and grab just about anything within reach! Touch-and-feel books can be a fun way of combining reaching and touching with book reading.

What is the practice?

This practice uses both store-bought and homemade touch-and-feel books to involve an infant in looking at, touching, and exploring books. All the while, a parent or caregiver describes what the child is doing, or tells the child a story as she plays with a book.

What does the practice look like?

An infant who loves to reach, grab, and touch everything and anything in sight is shown a touch-and-feel book. The infant is seated on her mother's lap facing away from her with the book held out in front of the child. Not surprisingly, the girl immediately reaches for and grabs the book. Mom opens the book, and to her daughter's surprise, she sees the fluffy tail of a rabbit! As the child runs her hand over the tail, her mother describes what she is doing ("The bunny tail is soft"). Page after page, the little girl gets more and more excited.



How do you do the practice?

The best touch-and-feel books are ones that include things that the child likes and enjoys. These can be store-bought or homemade books. Search the Web using **homemade touch-and-feel books** for ideas for making a special book for a particular child.

- Start by thinking about the things the child especially likes to see and touch. The more interesting the book pages are to the child, the better.
- Look for books that include as many of those favorite things as you can find. Try making a "My Special Touch Book."
- Find any position that is comfortable to the child to show her the book. Talk about and describe what she is seeing and doing.
- Repeat any movements or sounds she makes. This will encourage her to want to continue to look at the book.
- Make the book reading as fun and enjoyable as you can.

How do you know the practice worked?

- Does the child reach for and grab the book?
- Does she get excited when she sees things that are familiar to her?
- Does the child vocalize more and "talk to" what she is seeing?

Take a look at more touch-and-feel books

Terrific Textures

Seven-month-old Veronica often lies in her crib after waking up from a nap and rubs and touches whatever is in her crib (stuffed animal, crib rails, mobile). She seems to especially like the feel of different kinds of materials. Based on this interest, Veronica's mom and her home visitor have found some touch-and-feel books for her that include different animals and textures. They know Veronica especially likes looking at pictures of animals, so they decide to see what she will do with the touch-and-feel book. Veronica is beside herself! Almost immediately she is grabbing, touching, feeling, and vocalizing at the animals as her mother talks about and describes what Veronica is doing.



My Touchy-Feely Book

Gavin's caregiver, Katie, knows how much he loves to touch and feel different things. She also knows that 12-month-old Gavin especially likes things that move when he touches or pushes them. Katie gathers different things that Gavin likes to touch to make Gavin's Touchy-Feely Book. The book has 10 pages with a picture of one of his favorite things on the left side and the fabric or material that "feels like" that favorite thing on the right side. For instance, one page has a picture of a drum and a small piece of canvas to feel. Katie describes what Gavin is seeing and makes up sounds to go with each of the objects. Gavin and the other children in Katie's class love the new book and make different sounds as they play with it.



Cheek to Cheek

Bayley's physical difficulties make it hard for him to reach for things in front of him. With the help of his early interventionist, his mother has found a way to read to Bayley using touch-and-feel books that her 8-month-old son especially likes. Instead of Bayley reaching for and touching the pages of the book, his mom describes what he is seeing and then rubs his nose or cheek with the book page. Bayley's early interventionist helps by bringing different fabrics and textures with which he can play during their visits. Sometimes his mom also uses stuffed animals or other materials to show and talk about how different textures feel.

