

Painted Squishables

Kids, students, and adults will love to **squish** these foam concoctions. They look so life-like, you might think about eating them. Ah, but these are for hands only! These **hand-painted** beauties are made from **foam**! Try upcycling some leftover furniture foam, or find it new at a local home improvement store. Using **scissors**, **paint**, and an overnight **drying** time, you will create a take-away foam friend that you can squish and squash to your kinesthetic hand's and heart's content!

Materials:

- Furniture upholstery foam (new or used)
- Small and medium paint brushes
- Washable/tempera paint or acrylic paint
- Scissors
- Glue (optional)
- Jar, water, and paper towels
- Black marker: permanent or washable
- Embellishments: depends on your imagination!



Directions:

- 1) Start with an inspiration: will this foam become food? Animals? Silly creatures with googly eyes? Perhaps sketch the idea on paper, otherwise, use the black marker to denote the desired shape.
- 2) Keep the materials age appropriate – washable black marker works just as well as permanent marker in this case. (Most of the black template will be trimmed away.) Acrylic paint will stain, so tempera or washable paints might be your better option.
- 3) Again, use age-appropriate scissors to cut. Depending on the age and type, the scissor set might be sharper towards the tip or the base. Either way, the foam will cut more easily if you press it together while cutting. Continue using the scissors to create the desired shape and texture.
- 4) Now it's time to paint! The foam will absorb a lot of the color, like a sponge, so a heavy coat of the paint will create a bold result. After drying, add additional color and detail to enhance the 3D and like-life qualities of the foam-tastic squishable!
- 5) Squishing will happen once the paint dries (minimum) overnight. Test it out before allowing young hands to explore...and enjoy! Great to have in the car, to help hands/minds during fidgety times, or for imaginative play. The artistic process is so rewarding!

Extension:

See the "I've been thinking..." section at www.ioanruddimanedd.com for continuously updated content.

- ✓ How **big** can you build? Bust out your hot glue gun and create something magically massive – like a castle or a crown!
- ✓ Stimulate **fine motor skills** by creating miniatures of popular food or grocery store items.
- ✓ Create and **give as gifts** to friends and family.
- ✓ Research unique **geometric** shapes and see how close you can create the 3D figures!
- ✓ As always, **share** your pictures and comments online at **#littlechildrenBIGactivity**.