

Especially for parents of young children! 

The Right Touch

 *Stories and Listening*

Infants love to reach and grab just about anything they can get their hands on! Touch-and-feel books can be a fun way to combine reaching, touching, and reading. Touch-and-feel books are a great way to introduce stories and books to young children.

What is the practice?

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



What does the practice look like?

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

How do you do the practice?

The best touch-and-feel books include things that your child likes and enjoys. They can be commercial or homemade books. Search the Web using *homemade touch-and-feel books* for ideas about how to make a special book for your child.

- Start by thinking about the things your child especially likes to look at and touch. The more interesting the book's pages are to your child, the better she'll love her new book.
- Look for books that include as many of those favorite things as you can find. Make a special "Touch Book" for your child.
- When you show her the book, position your child so she is comfortable and can move her hands freely. Talk about and describe what she is looking at and touching.
- Repeat any movements or sounds your baby makes. This will encourage her to want to continue looking at the book.
- Make book reading as fun and enjoyable as you can.

How do you know the practice worked?

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

Take a look at more touch-and-feel play

A Touching Treasure

Victoria, who is 7 months old, often lies in her crib after waking up from a nap. She likes to rub and touch whatever is in her crib (blanket, stuffed animal, crib rails). She seems to especially like the feel of different kinds of materials. Mom remembers a favorite touch-and-feel book she read to Victoria's older brother that included different animals and textures. She knows Victoria always likes looking at pictures of animals so she decides to see what her daughter will do with the touch-and-feel book. Victoria is beside herself! Right away she is grabbing, touching, and babbling at the animal pictures as her mother describes what Victoria is doing.



Touchy-Feely Book

Gavin's mother knows how much her 1-year-old son loves to touch and feel different things. She also knows that Gavin especially likes things that move when he touches or pushes them. She gathers different things that her son 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" his favorite things on the right side (for example, a picture of a bird and several small feathers). Mom describes what Gavin is looking at and makes up sounds to go with each of the objects. Gavin reaches and grabs the book and makes different sounds as he plays with it.



In Touch

Antonio's physical difficulties make it hard for the 9-month-old to reach for things in front of him. His mother has found a way to read to him using touch-and-feel books that Antonio especially likes. Instead of Antonio reaching for and touching the pages of the book, his mama describes what she is looking at and then gently rubs his nose or cheek with the book page. Sometimes she uses stuffed animals or other materials to show Antonio how different textures feel.

