

# MOTHERS AND BABIES

## *Interested in Partnering with Us?*

### **ENRICH: Early Intervention to Promote Cardiovascular Health of Mothers and Children**

**Northwestern University** is providing an opportunity for HFA or PAT home visiting programs to partner with ENRICH.


**ENRICH** provides a toolkit of behavioral, social, and mindful approaches to promote cardiovascular health among pregnant individuals, new mothers, and their children. To learn more, including involvement and responsibilities, please click the title hyperlink above.


ENRICH activities will begin in early 2024. Agencies and participants will be compensated for their involvement.

**If interested in participating, please contact:**

**Danielle Lorch:** [dmlorch@northwestern.edu](mailto:dmlorch@northwestern.edu)

## *Innovation Updates*

 @mothersandbabiesnu

 [www.mothersandbabiesprogram.org](http://www.mothersandbabiesprogram.org)

### **MB-TXT: Mothers and Babies Text**

**MB-TXT** is a series of texts that complements MB content and focuses on skill reinforcement and practice. All texts are available in English or Spanish.

**If interested in MB-TXT, please contact us at:** [mbtxt@northwestern.edu](mailto:mbtxt@northwestern.edu)

(\*FREE for MIECHV programs in Illinois)

### **FAB: Fathers and Babies**

FAB is a 9-session stress management intervention aimed at improving fathers' mental health while equipping them with effective strategies to support their partners' mental health in their shared parenting journey.

FAB can be delivered alongside the MB intervention, or as a standalone intervention. Delivery options include in-person, virtual, text messages, or a mix.

We're excited to collaborate with you to introduce FAB to your families. If you are interested in learning more about FAB and want to be kept up-to-date, please complete our Inquiry form using the QR code.



# SENSORY TOY MAKING



## Benefits of Crafting for Children:

1. Sensory Development: Crafts painting and toy making engages a child's senses, helping with sensory exploration (sounds, textures, etc.).
2. Fine Motor Skills: Holding paintbrushes or using hands to create handprints promotes development of fine motor skills in babies.
3. Fostering Creativity: Engaging in artistic expression nurtures creativity, and valuable learning experience, aiding in the recognition and understanding of different colors.

## Benefits for Parents:

1. Bonding Time: Crafts painting provides a wonderful opportunity for parents to bond with their child in a relaxed and enjoyable setting.
2. Parent-Child Interaction: Parents can engage in conversation with child, describe colors, and encourage their child's artistic expressions, promoting language development.
3. Stress Relief: Art activities can be therapeutic for parents, offering a break from routine and a chance to express creativity.

## Materials Needed:

- Plain \*Jars: Try to use plastic ones as glass can easily break.
- Non-toxic Washable Paints: Choose colors for both children handprints and more intricate designs by parents.
- Paintbrushes: Larger, easy-to-grip brushes for children, and smaller brushes for parents for detailed designs.
- Aprons or Old Shirts: To protect clothing from paint.
- Beans/Rice: For a sensory jar/toy if choosing this route.

## Activity Instructions:

1. Prepare for activity: Lay down newspapers or a tablecloth to protect surfaces and dress your child in old clothes/apron. (Note: For parents, you may choose a more intricate design).
2. Painting: Dip the child's hand into the paint and help them make handprints. Alternatively, let them explore the paints on their own and directly touch the jars. Have different sized brushes available for more detailed work.
3. Allow to Dry: Set the painted jars aside to dry completely.
4. Create Sensory Sound Toys (Alternative): Once the jars are completely dry, open them up and add either rice or beans and then close them.

## Displaying the Finished Toys:

Celebrate the unique creations of both parents and child by proudly displaying the finished toys.

**\*\*Jars: You can use any other substitute such as bottles or a zip-loc bag if better suited.**



# PARTICIPANT HIGHLIGHT



## Henry Booth House-- Myia Smith and Nila Mitchell

Home visitor Myia Smith played a pivotal role in providing support to first-time mother Nila Mitchell. Nila experienced an array of challenges, including trauma and the premature birth of her son. Mothers and Babies (MB), under Myia's guidance, became a highly important source of support for Nila, offering personalized assistance that extended beyond conventional support structures. One significant coping mechanism introduced by Myia was journaling, a practice that resonated deeply with Nila. Journaling became a therapeutic outlet, allowing Nila to express her emotions, document her experiences, and navigate the complexities of early motherhood.

Additionally, Nila found solace in Myia's suggestion of incorporating calming sounds into her routine, a part of Pleasant Activities in the MB program. The soothing waves and sounds of nature became a source of comfort for Nila. This mindfulness practice, another MB encouraged practice, initially met with resistance, eventually became an integral part of Nila's coping strategies. Myia's thoughtful approach, recommending activities like nature walks and journaling, underscored the program's holistic focus on well-being.

Importantly, Myia's presence became a pillar of support for Nila as she grappled with the aftermath of trauma. Having experienced a traumatic incident during her pregnancy, Nila faced heightened stress levels and emotional challenges. Myia's role extended beyond the formalities of the program, fostering a trusting and supportive relationship that empowered Nila to open up about her experiences. Nila mentioned how her own mother lives far away from her, and Myia became that motherly figure for her, especially during this time of need. MB, guided by Myia, not only equipped Nila with practical coping mechanisms but also provided a safe space for her to share her trauma and receive empathetic support.

In essence, the combination of journaling, mindfulness practices, and the personalized support offered by Myia within MB became transformative for Nila. These strategies, tailored to Nila's unique needs and experiences, played a crucial role in her journey toward resilience and personal growth. Nila's accomplishments, including securing her own apartment and preparing to return to school, stand as tangible evidence of the program's success in fostering empowerment and independence. Myia's dedication to providing holistic and individualized care stands out as a testament to the program's capacity to address the multifaceted challenges faced by mothers like Nila, creating a nurturing environment for their well-being and empowerment.

