

Make Skin Tone Paint

For children with brown skin

Create your own skin tone paints to paint illustrations and self-portraits. This activity can be repeated several times over the coming years. When your child is older, they can create different skin tones, blush tones, hair color, eye color, and more.



Credit: Britt Hawthorne

To Get Started

- Mix together equal parts of washable red, blue, and yellow paint. Less is best in the beginning. This will create a beautiful deep brown.
- Now allow your child to add a little black (only a little) or white depending on their particular color.
- Allow the child to paint the skin tone color on their arm to see if it matches.
- Ask: "Does this match your skin?" Please remember: We aren't looking for perfection, we're looking for the child to love and find beauty in their skin tone.
- Say: "Let's make more!" Bottle the extra in a one-ounce container to save for later projects.
- Ask: "What color would you call this?" Then label the bottle and repeat the color they named it. "This is your skin tone. You are the color of _____."

White children, white-passing, and white-presenting children's skin tones are constantly being affirmed. Instead, I suggest working with your children to recreate the skin tones in the palette below, and practice naming the different shades of brown.

