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Project lets kids brush up on their artistic talents

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This semi-handmade supply tote is a great way for your child to be creative while "painting outside the lines."

A sturdy, 20-pocket canvas tool bag, stencils, fabric paint and some little hands provide a nice afternoon activity, as well as yielding a dandy art tote for a summer of pint-sized introspective painting or drawing.

An hour of creativity on a lazy, rainy afternoon beats an hour of watching TV. Be sure to stock up on plenty of supplies: smock, paper, pencils, crayons, markers, glue, round-nosed scissors, foam brush, paint brushes, chalk, ruler, sparkles and the like. And if you know your child will be running from one birthday soiree to another this summer, make up a batch of these in advance, stock them with supplies and tie a bow around the handle. No sweat at the last minute and it's a gift that will just get better over time.

What you need:

20-pocket canvas tote (Harbor Freight, \$7.99).

Fabric paints.

Fabric spray paint (Simply Spray, \$4.99 at Jo-Ann Fabric).

Stencils.

Paint brushes.

Scrap paper and tape.

Art supplies of your choice.

What you do:

1. Tape stenciled letters together, forming desired name.
2. Cover all other exposed areas with paper and tape.
3. Shake fabric spray paint, and spray name on tote; let dry.
4. Brush paint on child's hands and/or feet and press on the art bag.
5. Let child use different colors to paint designs all over the bag (Don't hover, parents).
6. Let entire bag dry, and then stock it full of supplies.

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