

# To Smoosh Peas Is to Learn

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## ***The New York Times:***

Everybody loves a messy eater.

In a study published this month in *Developmental Science*, 16-month-old children were taught new names for foods like jelly and syrup, then tested to see if they could connect those names with the foods when they were presented in different colors and shapes.

The conclusion? The toddlers learned better if they had, shall we say, interacted vigorously with the original samples — in other words, had played with their foods.

The study was widely picked up by media outlets, and headlines trumpeted that a toddler's propensity toward mealtime mess might actually be a sign of intelligence (a media trope not unlike the periodic celebration of the messy desk and the creative adult mind). On some level, it would seem, we are all very ready to cheer for the child with a face well covered in chocolate pudding.

Read the whole story: [\*The New York Times\*](#)