

Let's Make It!

Introduction

Play dough is a really quick, easy and satisfying thing to make. The actual making experience with the ingredients and how they react can support children's learning. It can be used in all kinds of learning activities. It needs to be stored in an airtight container or bag if you are going to reuse it.

Play Dough Ingredients

2 cups of plain flour

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup salt

2 cups of warm water

Food colouring (optional)

Play Dough Equipment

Cup

Bowl

Spoon



Method

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.
- Measure out 2 cups of plain flour and pour into the bowl.
- Measure out $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of salt and pour into the bowl.
- Measure out 2 cups of warm water and pour into the bowl.
- You can add food colouring if you wish. (Just a drop of your favourite shade).
- Stir the mixture together. It will become sticky. Continue stirring until the mixture has all come together.
- Once the mixture has come together, use your hands to knead the dough.
- If your play dough is too sticky you can add in extra flour.
- Knead the dough into a smooth lump.

Activity

**This is a great opportunity to learn about language, science and maths.
It is a shared experience.**

Start off by exploring the different ingredients together. Do they have the same texture, same colour or consistency? What happens when you add the flour and salt together? Is it dry or wet? What happens when you add in the water?

Use words such as **liquid, dry and wet**. Encourage your child to make observations about the changes throughout the process. Once they have started stirring you can talk about the texture. Is it **sloppy or sticky**? This is learning about the properties and ingredients. Encourage the children to use the language of texture and other descriptive words.

Play Dough Activities

Activities

Introduction

Play dough is a really fun material to play and learn with. You will have your own great ideas. There are so many possibilities for what it can be transformed into. Here are a few ideas to get you started. Find some equipment and utensils from around your home to support your child in exploring and mark making the play dough. You could use a rolling pin, cookie cutters, spoons, jar lids etc. Using a rolling pin helps children to work on their shoulder and arm strength.



Super Dough Spheres

Encourage your child to create play dough balls.

Rolling out spheres is an extra challenge for children to use their hands as they have to work in the opposite direction and in circular movements. Make gigantic balls, teeny balls and talk together about their sizes. What terms could you use? Are they miniature, minute, huge, etc.? Compare and contrast. Who has the biggest? Can we make one smaller? Can we make them the same size?

Equipment and Utensils

You may have some utensils (risk assess) that the children can use with their play dough. See what differences it makes using a spoon or a fork to cut up the dough. You may have some child friendly cutlery for your child to use to practice their self-help skills for meal times. The play dough should be nice and soft for children to easily cut through and manipulate (if it sticks you could add a little flour). Let them just play with the utensils and see what they can create.



Activities

Patterns

You may have some equipment that has patterns on. Look on the bottom of a cup or perhaps the handle of a spoon that has an interesting pattern. Try using a spatula to smooth the dough. Using different mashers is also fun. Your child can explore these by pressing the tools against the dough. Look for any similarities and differences. They may want to create their own patterns by making marks in the dough. They could use the end of a spoon or their finger to create dimples and holes. Have they got toys that could make marks in the dough such as a mini car?

Super Snakes

Children can make all kinds of wonderful creations with play dough. They may want to make their own slithery snake. This helps children to use their hands, moving them back and forth in opposite directions. They may create snakes of different lengths and sizes. Which one is the longest? Will it reach the end of the table? Perhaps they have made a tiny, little snake.

Treasure Dough

Use the play dough to hide treasure for your child to discover. You could hide coins, buttons, beads (risk assess) inside the play dough. Digging for treasure is a wonderful workout for your child's hands and fingers. You can talk about the different properties of the treasure you have found. Is it cold, bumpy, shiny or dull? Is it gold, bronze, metal or wooden? Imagine finding pretend rubies, pearls and sapphires.

Fine Motor Skills

Why not encourage your child to isolate their fingers as they experiment? You can say, "Let's get Peter Pointer to press the dough!" You can also get your child to pinch the play dough to work on their pincer grip. Encourage your child to squeeze the play dough in their hands to strengthen their hand grip. Getting the child to use their fingers and hands supports their ability to hold pens and pencils for their writing development.



Creative Play Activities

Here are some suggestions as to how you could use your lovely homemade play dough. It is a wonderful material to explore as it can be continuously manipulated and changed.

Perhaps you could make a pretend lunch or tea with the dough. It could be your own bakery, café or restaurant. Think about which equipment you have in your kitchen (risk assess). Have you got a rolling pin to roll out pastry and make pasties or pretend jam tarts? Talk about how the dough rolls out smoothly and how it stretches. You can use scientific and imaginative language. Imagine making a delicious pizza. Which toppings will you add? You could make some cheese, pineapple, tomatoes into shapes and add it to your base. Once you have created the pizza you may want to start slicing it up and sharing it with your family. How many pieces do you have? What about making a special birthday cake. How old is the person? You could add pretend candles. Count the candles and sing the Happy Birthday song together. You could also make food for a feast in a castle. What about making 5 currant buns and singing the song. Have some 1 pence coins and make this a great maths activity as well as being creative and language rich.



Your child may want to create their very own monster. You may have some accessories (risk assess) for them to use as legs, arms, eyes, wings, etc. You can use paper straws, feathers, beads, buttons and wool (risk assess). Talk about what features their monster may have. They may choose 8 legs because they can run really fast or one huge eye that can see everything. What colour is your monster? What is the monster's name? Consider what your monster might eat. The yellow monster's favourite food might be bananas. The green monster's favourite food might be peas.

Play Dough Activities



Think about what animals and creatures live in the forest, such as squirrels and hedgehogs. Perhaps you have some stories based in a forest, such as 'The Gruffalo' by Julia Donaldson. The child may want to create a mouse, a snake, an owl, a fox and even a Gruffalo. You may want to roll out some nuts for the mouse to eat, build a tree top house for the owl or an underground house for the fox. This supports their early literacy development as they recall from stories they know, remembering the beginning, middle and end.

You could use the play dough to create mini worlds. They may create an alien planet, a land of dinosaurs or an under-sea world. They may roll out space rocks and create little hidden alien homes. Think about what the aliens might look like, Will they be tall or short? Have they got two arms? You might have some googly eyes for them to use or they could scrunch up pieces of paper instead. Is it a hot or cold planet? Does the alien need fur to keep it warm?



