

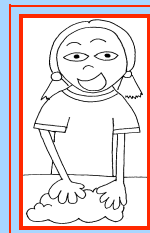
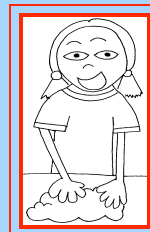
Playdough

PLAY
IDEAS 11

ABOUT
PLAY -
DOUGH



Most children find playing with dough great fun. Toddlers love squeezing the soft material in their hands, exploring the texture and consistency of the dough. Older children enjoy playing imaginatively, making things with the dough. Playdough is also a fun way to develop hand skills as young children poke, pinch, roll and cut. For children feeling grumpy and fed-up, playdough can be soothing and help them express their feelings. It's economical to make your own playdough, and kids will love to help you!



PLAYDOUGH AND DEVELOPMENT



Babies

Babies are too young to be given playdough as they tend to put everything into their mouth until about 18 months. Instead give them lots of sensory experiences with finger-feeding, water play in the bath and supervised play in sand- at the beach, or in a clean sand pit.



Toddlers

Around 18 months is a good time to introduce playdough. At this stage your child will enjoy simply patting, poking and squeezing the dough. They may "taste" it, but will not usually eat large quantities. They may also enjoy finding things hidden in the dough, and pushing things into it (popsticks, drinking straws, macaroni, plastic figurines).



Young Children

Young children will use the dough as part of their imaginative play (pretending to make birthday cakes or pizza, people or animals, etc). Around 4 years of age, children like to help make the playdough helping you to measure, pour, mix and colour the playdough. This teaches your child about concepts such as wet/dry, full/empty, hot/cold, etc. You can encourage language and problem solving: "What do we need? What will happen next? How is the salt like the flour?"



P.A.L. PLAY AND LEARNING PROGRAM
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WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Make different sorts of playdough- try scented, bumpy, sparkling. See the recipe sheet for lots of fun ideas!
- Give your child their own portion of dough and show them how to play with it. Encourage them to make their own creations, but remember: *the "doing" is more important than the end product.*
- Have some modelling tools to use, such as plastic knives and forks, plastic scissors, a rolling pin, potato masher, garlic press, biscuit cutters or piping bag.
- Occasionally don't have tools just use hand skills and imagination.
- Explore language- talk about how the playdough feels. It can be sticky, gooey, slimy, wet or warm. Talk about what you are making: shape, size, colour and number. Use lots of descriptive language: eg. Long, fat snake; big, flat pizza.
- If your child is reluctant to touch the playdough- encourage them to use a rolling pin and cutters first, then explore the dough as they feel comfortable.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- Supervise children closely if making dough. Be aware of the stove, the kettle and hot ingredients.
- Most children will try to eat the playdough initially, but most don't enjoy the salty taste. Small amounts won't do them any harm (because all the ingredients are edible), but avoid eating more than half a cup due to the high salt content of the dough. If your child likes to eat the dough - you are better to use an "edible" dough, such as damper or biscuit dough. Use playdough on washable surfaces and keep away from carpets. If you do need to clean playdough from carpet, scrape off with a knife and brush when dry. Washing away will stain the carpet.

SOME ACTIVITIES TO TRY

- **Make a cake** Sprinkle on coloured rice, poke in straws to make candles, sing Happy Birthday, and then blow out the "candles". Cut and share the cake.
- **Make a pizza** Talk about what you'd like on your pizza, then make vegetables and toppings. Bake, cut and share. Or use a pretend stove and cooking pots, and make "peas", "sausages", "chips", "pancakes", etc.
- **Make a zoo or farm** Use popsticks or cut straws to make a fence around plastic animals. Cut straws can also be used to make spiky hair, rays of the sun or legs on a spider.
- **Make a volcano or garden** An ice-cream lid covered in dough can make a good base, then decorate with twigs, leaves, flowers and pebbles.
- **Use a garlic crusher** or playdough machine to make "noodles" or "worms".
- **Sing songs** Make "5 fat sausages", or "5 currant buns" and sing the song
- **Shape numbers, letters, or their name** Older children may enjoy trying this. Or they can try "writing" on playdough "paper" with a toothpick.
- **Make imprints** Press a hand into the dough to make an imprint, and count the fingers. Try making an imprint of a bottle top, a coin or a building block.
- **Roll a long sausage** Cut the sausage with scissors or make bracelets and rings.
- **Make a face** Roll dough into balls for eyes, nose and mouth.

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