

PLAY DOUGH

Play dough is a tactile material that can be used in a variety of activities, which will help develop many foundation stage areas:



Personal, social and emotional development - working with peers, creating festival decorations, e.g. Christmas star

Communication, language and literacy - making letters from dough 'sausages', making characters from a story, e.g. cat

Mathematical development - rolling different size snakes, copying shapes, e.g. ball, cube, counting pieces of dough

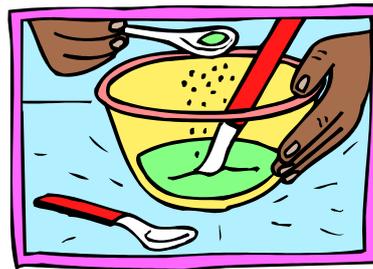
Knowledge and understanding of the world - selecting tools, e.g. plastic knife to cut the dough, rolling pin

Physical development - being aware of healthy practices, e.g. washing hands, wearing an apron, developing fine motor skills, e.g. poking, rolling

Creative development - making models, e.g. animals, house, shapes.

Play dough recipe:

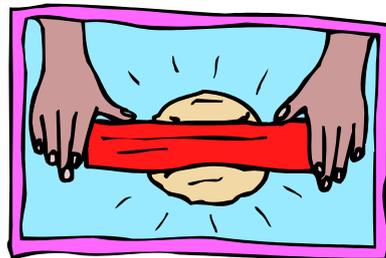
- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup warm water
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 1 teaspoon oil
- 1/4 cup salt
- food colouring



Mix all of the ingredients together in a large saucepan, adding the food colouring last. Stir the mixture using a wooden spoon, over medium heat until it becomes smooth. Tip the dough out of the saucepan and knead until blended smooth. When the dough is cool place it in plastic bag or airtight container, it will last for a month.

Play clay recipe:

- 1 cup cornstarch
- 2 cups salt
- 1 1/3 cups cold water



Put the salt and 2/3 of a cup of water into a saucepan and bring the mixture to the boil. In a bowl mix together the cornstarch with 2/3 of a cup of water. Blend the two mixtures together in the saucepan and knead into clay - the dough has to be heated as it is combined to set. This recipe makes about 3 cups of play clay, which can be air dried and then painted. Unused clay can be stored in an airtight container in the fridge.

ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE SKILLS WITH PLAY DOUGH

Making **'balls / spheres'** requires two hands to work co-operatively: one hand held flat whilst individual fingers on the other hand make circle movements to form ball shapes. The balls can be used for counting or sizing activities plus adding features, e.g. eyes on a face.

'Cutters' are useful for making shapes, e.g. circle, square. Cutters with a handle are easier to manipulate, i.e. grasp and release.

'Glitter dough' can be made by adding a small amount of glitter to the kneaded dough. This will give the dough a different consistency and feel. Alternatively split peas or lentils can be added to give a different texture.



'Laminated mats' are useful to define a work area and can be easily wiped clean. Mats can be designed to complement topic areas, e.g. mathematical development - the numeral 2 with two circles, creative development – a circle for a face with features like eyes shown on the mat. Mats can be fixed by placing a small amount of blu-tack under each corner.

'Modelling' using play clay or dough can help develop fine motor skills. It is helpful for a child to see the actual item to be copied, e.g. an apple or sausages so that they can copy the real object.

'Poking or prodding' pieces of play clay or dough will help strengthen fingers, e.g. poking the index finger into a flat circle to make the features on a face. Holding a piece of dough using one hand whilst prodding with finger helps develop using two hands co-operatively. **'Pinching'** movements using the thumb and index finger can make the ears on a rabbit or spines on a hedgehog.

'Rolling' out play dough helps develop fine and gross motor skills. Using a rolling pin encourages two hands co-operatively working to shape the dough. One handed rolling can be achieved.



'Smelly dough' is made in the same way as the recipe, but essence is added after kneading the dough. The essence will give the dough an aroma, e.g. lemon, vanilla. It is useful to check that children do not have allergies before adding essences.

'Using tools' with play clay or dough will encourage children to select appropriate materials, e.g. plastic knife for cutting, spoon for scooping.

RESOURCES

Soft stuff items Early Learning Centre www.elc.co.uk