

PLAY DOUGH

2 cups plain flour

1 cup salt

2 tbsp cream of tartar

2 tbsp cooking oil

Food colouring

2 cups boiling water

- Put all the ingredients into a large bowl adding the boiling water last, stir well until the ingredients are sticking together then tip out onto a clean work surface and knead well, taking care as the mixture may still be hot.
- The dough can be made more sensory by adding for example peppermint oil or vanilla essence or a little glitter before adding the water.
- To explore how colours change with your child you could make 2 separate batches of different colours, e.g. yellow and red; when played with the colours will amalgamate and you will eventually end up with a larger lump of orange dough.
- The recipe can easily be doubled or halved to make a larger or smaller quantity of dough.

CORN FLOUR GLOOP

2 cups of corn flour

1 cup of cold water to mix (add half the water to start and explore how it mixes together)

Optional - A few drops of food colouring (added to the water)

- Mix the water into the corn flour and colouring. It will take some time to mix together but encourage your child to play with the gloop before it is mixed. What does it feel like?

Understanding Gloop - What is Happening?

Solid or Liquid: Corn flour is made of lots of long, stringy particles. When water is added they do not dissolve in water, but they do spread themselves out. This allows the gloop to act both like a solid and a liquid. When you roll the mixture in your hands or apply pressure to it, the particles join together and the mixture feels solid. But if it is left to rest or is held up and allowed to dribble, the particles slide over each other and it feels like a liquid.

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, and 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 lolly sticks 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.

Use a garlic crusher or a play dough 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 play dough "paper" with a cocktail stick.

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 and make bracelets and rings.

Make a face Roll dough into balls for eyes, nose and mouth.

WHAT CAN YOUR CHILD LEARN THROUGH PLAYING WITH DOUGH?

Motor Skills

One of the first ways that Play Dough affects infant development is with motor skills. As a child plays with Play Dough, s/he develops the necessary muscle strength as well as coordination for future activities. Adding in other elements, such as rolling pins or pastry cutters for your child to use can help further this development.

Attention Span

Sensory activities, such as playing with Play Dough, often help children stay focused for longer periods of time. This can help lengthen the attention span of other activities as well.

Creativity

Play Dough also helps toddlers develop a healthy sense of creativity. Encouraging the development of creativity in a toddler helps develop the child's mind, including his skills of decision making, problem solving and imaginative thought in general.

Social

Play Dough also helps develop a child's social skills. When you have the toddler play with Play Dough in a group situation where s/he must share the materials together, Play Dough can teach the toddler to share with others, interact with other toddlers, as well as learn to communicate and share her final results with the play group.

Learning

Play Dough can also help a child learn basic information such as colours. Placing out multiple colours of Play Dough, and then asking your child to pick out the "red" ball of dough, or the "green" ball of dough, can help your child not only learn his/her colours, but be able to distinguish one colour from many others.

Play Dough can also be used to teach counting, shapes and other basic educational information.

Make different sorts of play dough- try scented, bumpy, sparkling.

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 a piping bag.

Occasionally don't have tools just use hand skills and imagination.

Explore language- talk about how the play dough 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: e.g. long, fat snake; big, small, flat pizza.

If your child is reluctant to touch the play dough- encourage them to use a rolling pin and cutters first, and then explore the dough as they feel comfortable.