

One Page Resources: Tips for Working with Playdough

"Squeeze Me": Tips For Quality Play Dough Experiences

- Have children be part of the process of making the play dough and talk with them about the ingredients in the recipe. Children can choose the color or occasionally you can leave the dough white.
- Make play dough on a regular basis (replace dried out dough).
- Allow children to mix different colors and or smells into the play dough and talk about what happens. You can use a zip lock bag with small pieces of dough with a little food coloring or a smell, (example rose, lavender scents) to experiment with mixing colors and smells.
- Store play dough in an air tight plastic bag or container and make sure it is accessible to children by storing it on a low shelf.
- Spend time talking with children about how to keep play dough moist by closing the bag or container. Experiment by leaving some play dough out so children compare the dry and moist play dough. Provide card or wood pieces for a portable surface, for storage or display.
- Be intentional when adding tools to use with the play dough. Remember to rotate tools on a regular basis.
- Talk with children about the purpose and how to use tools, especially at the start of the year when new children join. You can also put the tools away and enjoy the play dough on its own especially when it's warm and fresh out of the pan.
- Spend time interacting with children at the play dough table, take pictures and write down children's quotes about their creations. Without taking over the play or interrupting, sit down with the children at the play dough table model experimenting and investigating with the play dough.
- Allow children to experiment with dry play dough by adding small amounts of water.
- Talk with children about the characteristics of the play dough using descriptive language, for example words like smooth, stretchy, soft, sticky, dry, crumbly, squeeze, push and pull.
- Have children participate in the cleaning process such as sweeping the floor or washing the play dough tools.
- Examples of tools that can be used with play dough: popsicle sticks, tooth picks, plastic animals, straws, rocks, twigs, nuts, shells, plastic dishes and silverware, lace, buttons, beads, hair rollers, string, letter shapes, cookie cutters, rollers (different sizes) glitter, sequins, old toy parts and recycled materials.
- Keep in mind that children are developing many skills when exploring and making play dough such as numeracy, science, social interaction, problem solving, fine motor, listening, role play and focusing on a task.

Cooked Play Dough—2 cups of plain flour, 1 Tbsp. of cooking oil, 1 tsp. cream of tartar
2 cups of colored water, 1 cup of salt

Place all of the ingredients in a medium size or large pan. Cook slowly on medium-high and stir it until the play dough thickens. Add color while mixing ingredients together or afterwards.

Uncooked Play Dough: $\frac{1}{4}$ cup salt, 1 cup flour, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water, and food coloring

Mix the salt and flour in a bowl. Add water and food coloring. Knead dough to make a clay consistency. Note: This dough doesn't last a long as the cooked recipe.

For more information, contact your local PreK consultant.

www.playdoughrecipe.com, The Intentional Teacher, 2007

