

Playdough Fun

Materials:

- large mixing bowl
- 1 cup boiling water
- 4 cups flour (own brand)
- 2 tablespoons of cooking oil
- 1 table spoon of cream of tartar

- 1 1/2 cups of salt
- food colouring (we used red and blue to make purple)
- glitter (optional)

Instructions

1. **Pour boiling water** into a large mixing bowl.
2. **Next add food coloring.** Once you add the food colouring to the water, stir well.
3. **Add the dry ingredients** (flour and salt, cream of tartar) to the mix. You can stir a little at this point to begin blending the ingredients.
4. **Next add 2 tablespoons of oil.** You can add more oil later if the mix seems to dry. Oil is the secret to keeping this "no cooking required" recipe soft! If you don't add enough oil, the mix will be very crumbly.
5. **This next step is a big hit with children!** Add generous amounts of glitter to your mix and begin mixing everything together.
6. **Knead the ingredients together** until a soft dough is formed.

To store, simply roll the dough into small balls and keep in plastic bags or a plastic container.



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WE ALL KNOW THAT PLAY DOUGH IS FUN AND POPULAR WITH YOUNG CHILDREN, BUT APART FROM MAKING A MESS WHAT IS IT REALLY GOOD FOR? HERE ARE THE FABULOUS BENEFITS OF ALLOWING CHILDREN TO PLAY WITH PLAY DOUGH AND THE MANY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES THAT HAPPEN ALONG THE WAY!

Using play dough (or in fact any type of dough) with young children is beneficial in **so** many ways. Here are some ideas of how fabulous it is, divided into the areas of development that it helps:

Fine motor development:

The **malleable** properties of play dough make it fun for investigation and exploration as well as secretly **building up strength** in all the tiny hand muscles and tendons, making them ready for pencil and scissor control.

Poking in objects and pulling them out of play dough strengthens hand muscles and co-ordination.

As part of simple, tactile play it can be squashed, squeezed, rolled, flattened, chopped, cut, scored, raked, punctured, poked and shredded! Each one of these different actions aids fine motor development in a different way, not to mention hand-eye coordination and general concentration.

Having a wide range of **additional extras** to use while playing extends the investigation and play possibilities endlessly. Poking in sticks provides a challenge and a new physical skill. Squeezing through a garlic press leads to wonder and amazement at seeing it change shape, as well as using a gross motor movement to accomplish it. Sticking in spaghetti requires a delicate hand and can lead to threading and stacking pasta shapes or beads over the top.

Imagination and Creativity:

As soon as you introduce open ended play items to add to the mix, play dough becomes the perfect medium for numerous types of **imaginative play** and can represent so many things in a child's eyes.

A jar of candles and cupcakes cases leads naturally to birthday party role-play, counting out candles and singing! Glass pebbles can lead to sea-side imaginative small world play with story telling about sea creatures and mermaids!

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List of additional flavours and textures to add to play dough:

cocoa powder
ginger
cinnamon
turmeric
food colouring
essential oils

textures

sand
pebbles
rock salt
tiny pasta
glitter
sequins

Calming and soothing:

As any adult who has played with dough can tell you, the effects of all that squeezing and pummeling are great for stress relief and can feel extremely therapeutic! Little children can struggle to express their emotions and using dough while talking and singing can really help that process.

Maths and Literacy development: In more focused play, play dough can be used as a fantastic way to practise letter and number work. Children can form letters of the **alphabet**, spell out their own name, make **numbers**, form 2D and 3D **shapes**, compare **lengths/ thicknesses/ weights**, **count** out rolled balls to match **numeral** cards, **match** and **sort** by colour and SO many more ideas too!

World Around Us:

The actual act of making the play dough together with your child can lead to lots of questioning and prediction skills. Here we have some solid materials (flour, salt etc) to which we are going to add some liquids (oil, water.) What do you think will happen? What can we make? The child gets to explore and observe the changing state of materials in a hands-on way, and be filled with wonder as the bowl of unrelated ingredients comes together to form a sticky then smooth and squishy ball of dough! We often take these things for granted, but in the eyes and hands of a child that's quite some transformation!

Following a recipe and instructions, counting out cups, stirring and mixing and just being able to spend time on a collaborative project with an adult are all meaningful and important experiences too!