



Play and Learning 10

Playdough

Most children find playing with playdough great fun! Children enjoy **using their imagination** and **exploring with their hands** – poking, pinching, rolling and cutting. Playing with dough can also be a soothing, quiet play option.

When it comes to playdough:

- **babies** aren't ready for playdough until they're about 18 months old. But they can explore different textures when finger feeding, playing in the bath or in clean sand.
- **toddlers** love poking, patting and squeezing the dough with their hands, hiding and finding things and pushing things into the dough.
- **young children** use playdough in imaginative play, making birthday cakes, animals, and just about anything they can think of!

What you can do

- If your child is reluctant to touch playdough, encourage them to use a rolling pin or cutters first, then **explore the dough with their hands as they feel comfortable**.
- Encourage your child to make whatever they want. **Playing with the dough is more important than what they make.**
- If playdough gets on the carpet – scrape it off with a knife, then brush off when dry. Washing may stain the carpet.



Some activities to try

- **Make different sorts of playdough** with your child – scented, bumpy, sparkling!
- **Talk about how the playdough feels** – warm, cold, sticky, soft, and about what your child is making – size, colour. Use lots of describing words.
- Encourage your child to **use their imagination** and create something without using tools.
- Have some playdough **tools to use** – try things from the kitchen (potato masher, cutters) or craft box (pop sticks, straws).
- **Pretend to cook** – try making a cake, pizza or sausage to cut and cook.
- **Make a face** or simple animal, or a zoo or farm for plastic toys.
- **Sing songs** as you create – 'This is the way we roll the dough' or 'Five fat sausages'.
- **Build a garden** using dough with rocks, sticks and leaves.



Playdough and other recipes

Playdough – uncooked

- 1 cup plain flour
- ½ cup salt
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 – 2 tablespoons cream of tartar
- 1 cup boiling water
- food colouring (optional)
- Mix the dry ingredients and oil.
- Quickly add boiling water, stirring rapidly as the dough thickens.
- Knead until smooth – add more flour if too sticky.

Cornflour slime

- 1 cup cornflour
- 1 cup water, with food colouring added
- Plastic tray
- Mix ingredients together until stiff.
 - The mixture will ooze through fingers and spread over the tray.
 - Then it can be gathered back into the hands, leaving the tray clean.
- When finished, put slime into a bag and into the bin – never pour down the sink.

Permanent playdough (Baker's clay)

- 2 cups salt
- ½ cup water
- 1 cup cornflour
- Mix together in a saucepan and gently heat.
- Keep stirring until it looks like bread dough. Use soon after making.
- Make models or beads. (Don't forget the hole!)
- Dry for at least 2 days.
- Paint and decorate!

Damper – edible

- 3 cups self – raising flour
- 45 grams butter
- ½ cup milk
- ¾ cup water
- Sift flour into a bowl and rub in butter. Make a well in the middle.
- Add combined milk and water in one go. Mix lightly with a fork.
- Knead dough on floured board until smooth.
- Shape or use a cutter – this is where your child can help!

Bake on a metal tray for 40 minutes in a moderate oven (180°) until golden brown and cooked through. Serve straight from the oven.

Keeping your child safe

- Supervise your child closely at all times while making dough, especially around hot dough, stoves, and kettles. Avoid flammable or toxic materials – use edible food colours.
- Babies, toddlers and young children can choke on small toys and objects. Regularly check toys to make sure they are safe and in good condition.
 - Toys should be bigger than a 20 cent coin.
 - Strings on toys should be less than 20 centimetres long.
- Do a safety check and make sure your home is safe for your child to actively explore..
- Some children will try to eat playdough. Small amounts won't hurt them, but don't let them eat too much as it is usually very salty. If your child likes to eat dough, use an edible dough like damper.

Find out more

For more information on play, learning, and a range of other topics, visit:

- playgroupwa.com.au
- bringingupgreatkids.org
- raisingchildren.net.au
- cahs.health.wa.gov.au/childhealthresources

For more information about the metropolitan **Child Development Service** phone 1300 551 827 or visit cahs.health.wa.gov.au/childdevelopment

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