

Valentine's Day Play Dough Sensory Recipe

Share this activity with someone special on any day

Hands down – rolling, patting, and shaping play dough is one of our favorite ways to build tactile skills, and it's a fun sensory experience for the whole family.

This recipe from Hannah Rinaldi's blog "Eat, Drink and Save Money" is easy to make and nontoxic. Best of all, for some children, the red color and glitter make the dough easier to see on various surfaces.

The recipe makes about 16 ounces of dough – enough to share with friends on Valentine's Day, or any day!





Photo child's hand with play dough from eat, drink, and save money.

Ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup salt
- 2 tablespoons cream of tartar
- 2 tablespoons red or gold glitter
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil or coconut oil
- 1 ½ cups water
- 3 teaspoons, or 10-15 drops, red food coloring

Materials

- Large mixing bowl
- A 16-ounce glass measuring cup or bowl for mixing and pouring hot liquids
- Measuring spoons
- Mixing spoon

Recipe	Suggested Sensory Directions
1. Gather the ingredients, a large mixing bowl, a measuring cup or bowl, a mixing spoon, a teaspoon, and a tablespoon.	<div data-bbox="699 1178 753 1234" style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"></div> <div data-bbox="753 1207 1398 1276" style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <p>What do they feel like? Are their textures rough or smooth? Does the mixing bowl feel warm or cold?</p> </div> <div data-bbox="699 1297 753 1354" style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle; margin-top: 10px;"></div> <div data-bbox="753 1329 1421 1398" style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>What happens when you bang the utensils together or against the bowl?</p> </div>

Recipe	Suggested Sensory Directions
<p>2. Measure the flour into the mixing bowl. Then add the salt and cream of tartar. Stir the dry ingredients together.</p>	<p> Flour is wheat ground until it's very soft. If some spills on your work surface, touch it with your finger and trace some shapes. If some salt spills on your work surface, you can feel the crunchy crystals.</p> <p> Put a little salt on your fingertip and touch your child's lips. Talk about the other things you eat or experience that are salty – like pretzels or even the ocean!</p> <p> Does the mixture make any sounds when you stir it? Maybe you hear your spoon scraping the sides of your bowl?</p> <p> How can you create visual contrast? Talk about the white color of the flour in your bowl. A metal bowl is shinier and more reflective. The flour will “pop” more in a colored bowl.</p>
<p>3. Add the glitter to the dry ingredients and stir.</p>	<p> The glitter makes the flour sparkle!</p>
<p>4. Bring water to a boil in your tea kettle or in a pot on the stove. Or you can microwave the water until it's hot. When it's ready, pour 1 ½ cups into a glass measuring cup or mixing bowl.</p>	<p> Let your child watch you heat the water on the stove or in the microwave.</p> <p> Talk about how the water is “cold” when you turn the faucet on over your sink and then it becomes “hot” as you heat the water over your stove or in the microwave oven. Using verbal descriptions makes this part of the recipe come alive as you explain how water changes temperature and even creates steam!</p> <p> Allow your child to touch the side of your measuring cup or bowl. It's hot!</p>

Recipe	Suggested Sensory Directions
<p>5. Add the oil and red food coloring to the measuring cup or bowl and stir. Pour the mixture into the flour mixture and stir well until it forms a play dough.</p>	<p> Is the mixture hard or easy to stir?</p> <p> Listen for any sounds the mixture makes when you pour the hot water into the bowl and stir it. Talk about what you're doing, using action verbs and adjectives. For example, "Look! The flour is turning red as we pour the steaming, hot water into the bowl. Can you see any sparkles?"</p> <p> The flour mixture is turning red. What other things are red in your home? A pair of mittens? A red wagon? The hearts you cut out of construction paper on Valentine's Day?</p>
<p>6. Now, you can play with your homemade dough!</p>	<p> Encourage your child to touch the dough. Sometimes, new textures can be introduced more easily with your child's feet because they are less tactilely sensitive. Make handprints or footprints in the dough. What does the dough feel like? Is it sticky? Soft? It still might be warm from when you added the hot water.</p> <p> Smoosh the dough. Poke it. Smash it and listen to the sound it makes. Describe out loud what you and your child are doing with the dough and how it feels when you touch it.</p> <p> If you want your dough to have a scent, you can add a touch of peppermint extract to the dough while mixing the wet and dry ingredients together.</p>
<p>7. Be creative! Roll the dough out and use cookie cutters to make hearts or other different shapes.</p>	<p> Make a play dough Valentine with your teacher from A Shared Vision!</p>

When you're done playing, store the dough in a Ziploc gallon bag or an airtight container.