



The benefits
of playing
with playdough

Why do we play with playdough?

- It helps develop fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination and general concentration
- It helps develop imagination and creativity
- It can help calm and relax your child
- It can help develop early maths skills
- It can support with early writing skills by building muscles in the hands



Make
your own
playdough
(child friendly)

You will need:

- 2 cups of flour
- 1 cup of salt
- 4 tsp of Cream of tartar
- 2 tpb of cooking oil
- Food colouring optional

Add all above ingredients to a bowl,
your child can help with this part

ADULTS ONLY

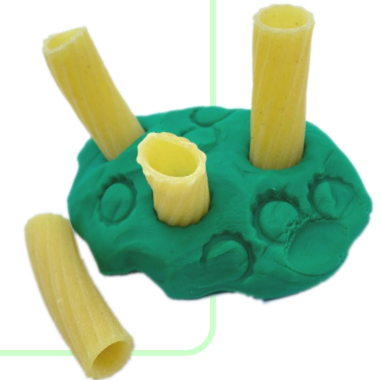
- Add 2 cups of boiling water
- Mix quickly until a ball is formed

When it is cool to touch, it is ready to play with

What can I
do once I have
made the
playdough?

- Playdough is a sociable activity and gives children the opportunity to learn new words and concepts such as long and short.
- Roll some balls and use some tongs or large tweezers to pick them up.
- Make 5 fat sausages and sing the rhyme, '5 fat sausages sizzling in a pan'
- Use cutters to make shapes and talk about them.
- Use things to make the playdough smell different such as cinnamon, mixed herbs, lavender etc.

For older children: To extend the play, make letters in their names



Sensory Play

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Top Tips



Benefits of
sensory play

Sensory play encourages children to learn through different textures and materials. It develops their confidence to try new things and communicate about what they are doing. It encourages self-directed play and independence.

What is
gloop?

'Gloop' is cornflour, water and food colouring mixed together until there are no lumps, this can be done with your child.

Have a go at making a ball in your hands and see what happens! When your finished playing, just wash everything up with warm soapy water.



What can
I do?

Prepare the area you are going to use with a tablecloth/shower curtain/old towel. An apron for you and your child might be handy.

- Different size shapes and colour ice cubes
- Gloop
- Dry pasta and measuring cups
- Uncooked rice/flour on a tray to encourage mark making
- Water with bubble bath in
- Sand/soil with spoons/buckets and spades
- Shaving foam on a tray
- Mixing paint with brushes or hands
- Making and playing with playdough/slime



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Why do we communicate with children?

Children need to develop their communication and listening skills to encourage social interactions, play and learning.

Adults need to be able to listen and respond to their children's communication attempts.

How can I help?

- When your child is trying to communicate with you, try to stop what you are doing, get down to their level and listen to what they are trying to say.
- To get your child's attention, use their name and wait for them to be looking at you before you speak to them.
- Reducing background noise such as televisions, allows your child to get used to hearing face to face conversations rather than those through a screen.
- If your child does not get the word right 1st time, don't worry. Repeat what they are trying to say back to them i.e. "yes, that is a purple car"

What activities can I do?

- Make a song bag – any objects can represent a song and your child can use the objects to choose their own song.



- Share stories with your child
- Play games, take turns and allow for natural communication. A game like 'pairs' will develop great communication. Try playing "What's the time Mr Wolf" as this encourages communication, listening and following instructions
- Use a running commentary when you are playing with them. This will help them to link words with objects.





Why do children need to be independent?

When children learn to be independent they develop their confidence, knowledge of right and wrong, make their own decisions and develop a sense of self-worth and self-esteem.

Independent toileting

Using a potty is a new skill for your child to learn. Take it slowly and go at your child's pace, following your child's lead, in time they will want

to use the potty. Look for the signs they are ready, these may include:

- They are starting to notice when they have a wet or dirty nappy.
- Gaps between wet nappies are getting longer.
- They may start to tell you when they are having a wee.

Every child develops at their own rate, try not to compare your child with others.

More resources:

www.eric.org.uk/top-10-potty-training-tips

www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/potty-training-tips/

www.huggies.com.au/toddler/toilet-training/tools/guide

Independent eating

Family meals can be an enjoyable social event. Mealtimes with a toddler can be a little crazy while they are learning to feed themselves.

- Role modelling how to eat while having a meal with your child will develop their awareness of feeding themselves



- When your child holds their spoon, it allows them to develop the fine motor skills needed to hold a pencil when they start school and learn how to write
- Independent feeding gives your child chance to develop their senses, such as taste, smell, texture. It can allow them to develop a sense of hot and cold. Children will start to develop a taste of their own and know which foods they like and dislike.



Why does my child need to be able to dress and undress?

Being able to dress and undress themselves, encourages your child to gain independence, confidence, and can help them develop self-esteem.

When your child starts school, they will be expected to try and get themselves undressed and dress at times such as when having PE lessons.

How can I support my child to do this?

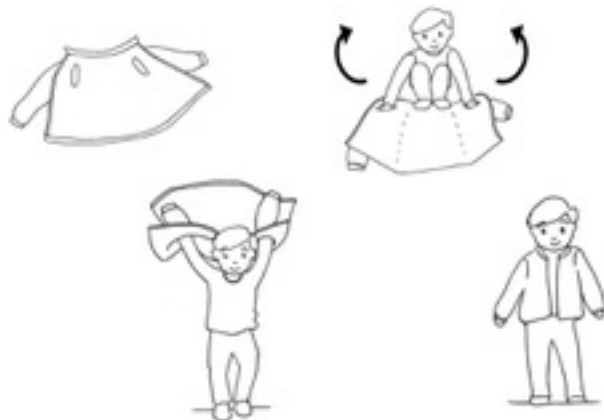
- Involve your child in the un/dressing process as early as possible.
- Loose-fitting clothing is easier to manage than tight fitting clothing.
- As you are getting your child dressed, start to encourage them to help such as putting on one sock while you do the other.
- Talk your child about the correct way of getting dressed i.e. underwear goes on before trousers.
- Give lots of praise when they have done it – do not worry about it being inside out or back to front!

I can...

Put my own coat on

Try this little trick to help your child be independent in putting on their own coat

- Lay the coat on the floor with arms spread out and the hood/collar facing the child
- Have your child place their arms in the arms of the coat
- Your child then just needs to lift their arms up and over their head and the coat is on





Benefits of Early Education

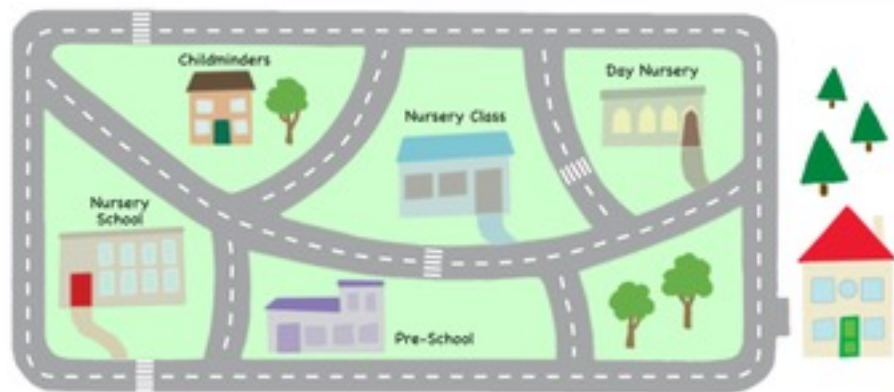
- Getting ready for school
- Developing independence
- Important social skills
- Key language skills
- Developing a thirst for learning
- Opportunities that are not readily available at home

Childcare Options

- Childminders
- Pre-school
- Day Nursery
- Nursery School
- Nursery Class

Things to consider when looking for a nursery

- Are you and your child made to feel welcome?
- Are the children engaged in activities?
- What is the settling in process? Are you invited to stay?
- Can children free flow between inside and out throughout the session?
- Has your child enjoyed the visit and did they feel comfortable?



Help with childcare costs

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2 Year Old
Free Entitlement

Available for families that meet certain criteria

- Low income (Family income of less than £16,140)
- Universal Credit (Income of less than £15,640)
- Claiming Disability living allowance for the child
- Child was previously looked after by a local authority
- You can apply for this funding through the Council website

3 & 4
Year Old
Universal
Entitlement

**Available for all children from
1st September, 1st April or
1st January after they turn 3 years old**

- 15 hours per week during term time (570 hours per year)
- Can be stretched to cover holidays (e.g. 11 hours per week over 50 weeks)
- You apply for this funding through your chosen Early Years Provider

**For more advice and information on childcare visit
www.childcarechoices.gov.uk**



3 & 4
Year Old
Extended Entitlement
30 Hours Funding

**Additional 15 hours per week (570 hours per year)
for working families**

- A working family is when both parents (or a single parent living on their own) work and earn over £139 per week (£7228 per year) and do not earn over £100,000 per year
- You will need to apply through HMRC to get a code
- Once you have a code take it to your chosen Early Years Provider
- This code must be reconfirmed every 3 months

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Junk Modelling

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Top Tips



Why junk modelling?

Children will develop their imagination and creative skills when they are given the freedom to explore and create their own models using everyday resources. It will also help develop children's problem solving, reasoning and numeracy skills as they work out what fits, what doesn't and how to make it stick together.

What can my child use?

- Old cereal boxes
- Egg boxes
- Plastic bottles
- Cotton wool balls
- Scrap fabric
- Bubble wrap
- Cardboard tubes (wrapping paper, kitchen roll)
- Old CD's

The list is endless! Don't forget – masking/strong tape!



What can I make?

Anything your child makes, will be precious and something they will take pride in. Allow your child's imagination to run wild and don't worry if it doesn't look perfect or an ideal image of what they have made.

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Why do we encourage children to make marks?

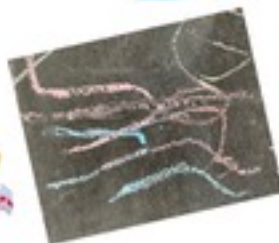
Mark making is a skill all children develop over a period of time. The process of mark making takes time to ensure children have a firm foundation for the skills needed to hold a pencil.



I can...

These skills include, large body movements that require children to reach and stretch. It is vital that children are not forced to write from an early age without building the large and fine motor skills essential to hold a pencil.

- Use muscles in my hand and arms to make big movements
- Pick up different size objects using my pincer grip (thumb and index finger)
- Make marks using any part of my body



Ideas to promote early writing

- Use a finger in a tray covered in sand/sugar/foam/flour to make marks.
- Use big paint brushes to make marks outside on the ground/fence using water.
- Threading pasta shapes onto a piece of string or shoelace.
- Play with playdough.
- Peg clothes onto the clothes line to help develop muscles.
- Sticky tape pens onto the back of a toy truck/car so when the toy truck/car is driven, it makes marks on the paper.





Benefits of music and movement

Music and movement helps develop large motors skills, imagination, following instruction as well as balance and co-ordination.

Your child's brain will start to develop its memory and your child will start to figure things out for themselves. Music and movement helps develop social skills and supports children to build their confidence. They can develop their creativity through music and movement and learn how to express themselves.

Why don't you try...

Singing 'I am the music man and I can play....'
Add on your own instruments and try to make the sound

These links are helpful for finding ideas of things to do:

www.learningstationmusic.com

www.nhs.uk/change4life

www.stickykidscatalogue.co.uk

What can I do?

- Make your own instruments using empty bottles/pots filled with dried pasta/rice
- Old saucepans and wooden spoons
- Explore ways of making sounds using your body such as stamping feet
- Pop on some music and move your body
- Play a range of music so your child can move to different beats and speeds





Why do we play outdoors?

Children can enjoy the natural environment and learn to seek out exercise, fresh air, and activity. Being outside is an exciting sensory experience for all children. They can explore spaces, natural objects and create their own type of play.

Did you know?

- Outdoor learning promotes a healthier sleep patterns.
- It can stimulate your child's appetite.
- It builds good friendship bonds.
- Children learn about the world around them in a natural environment.

What's the weather like?
Do you need wellies or a sun hat?



Ideas for outdoor play

- Make a picture on the ground using natural objects.
- Use homemade 'binoculars' to look for wildlife and birds while out on a walk.
- Use water and brushes to make pictures on the ground.
- Support children to gain an understanding of appropriate clothing for outdoor learning by exploring the different weathers.
- Take bowls, spoons and cooking utensils outside and start a mud kitchen making pies for family and friends.
- You will need 1 egg box with each space coloured in a different colour or a piece of paper with a variety of colours on. See if you and your child can find something from outside to match the colours in your box.



Starting nursery and school

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Top Tips



Starting
nursery
and school

Starting nursery or school should be an exciting and positive experience for both the family and the child. Sometimes it can feel a little overwhelming. Here are a few tips to help the transition go smoothly.

Before
the first day...

- Make sure you know how long it takes to travel to the nursery/school, do a few practice runs.
- Find out where you need to take your child, and at what time you need to be there.
- Find out where to collect your child, and at what time. Let them know who will be picking them up so they know who to expect.
- Encourage your child to carry their book bag and lunch box into school.
- Have you labelled everything? Make sure your child knows where the labels are and make sure they are easily visible.



On the
first day...

- Try to encourage your child to have some breakfast, even if it is just a piece of fruit.
- Give yourself and your child time to get there, think about traffic etc. Do you both know where you are going to drop off?
- Does your child know what they are having for lunch? Are they having a packed lunch (try not to give them too much) or hot dinner? Share the hot meal menu with your child.
- Say goodbye with a smile on your face. The staff will look after your child once you have gone.



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Learning from home

We understand how stressful life can be while home schooling your children during this current time. You are not on your own feeling this way and we are here to help with some fun ideas and activities.

These hands-on activities will help you and your child with their active learning. Your child's attention span will be dependant on their age, so short and snappy activities are the key to success!

Activities

Why don't you make an 'I can' book?

- Use a note or scrap book and write 'I Can' on the front
- On each page, what something that your child can do, encourage them to tell you what this is such as "I can dance"
- Draw pictures of these achievements

What's in the box?

- Find a old box
- Hide an item in the box
- Encourage your child to ask questions to find out what the item is such as "does it have legs?"

What can I do?

- Make a picture timetable so your child's knows what is coming next

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning		Play Time			Story Time		TV Time
Afternoon		Arts & Crafts		Outside Play		Go to the Park	

- Play games such as "What's in the box?"
- Plant seeds such as cress, encourage your child to water it and see how it grows
- Share a story over your chosen social media platform with grandparents, friends, or family
- Try to spend 30 minutes or more outside, being physical each day such as running, hopping, skipping