PLAYDOUGH SESSION IDEAS

Add some props from around the home and playdough play becomes a powerful way to support your child's learning.

Exploring playdough helps your child use their imagination and strengthen the small muscles in their fingers. Using playdough with you supports your child's social skills such as sharing, taking turns, and enjoying being with other people. Playdough also encourages children's language and literacy, science, and maths skills—all at the same time!

You can **choose a theme**-, eg 'lets make cakes', lets roll balls/tubes' 'lets make worms' (these can become numbers or letters if you shape them'), 'lets make patterns on the dough'

or

you can let your child explore in their own way (with your hand under their hand if needed), and encourage some of the skills below.

Around-the-House Playdough Props

You can use these objects to cut, shape, scrape, squash etc

- Birthday candles
- Blocks eg lego
- Bottle tops
- biscuit cutters
- Combs
- Large buttons and other objects that can be pressed into the playdough to make a design

- Feathers
- Leaves, twigs, pebbles
- Plastic knives, forks, and spoons
- Rolling pin or plastic bottle

- Straws
- String or shoelaces

- toy people and animals

sharing and talking

During playdough time at school, children **share talk** with adults about what they're making and how. Re-create this atmosphere at home by including yourself in the play. Make comments about their work ("You cut it again"). **Ask questions** so children can describe and think about what they are doing ("What does this do?"). Connect their play to **the real world** ("Can you make a worm?) Teach **cooperation** ("I can help you make your car"), observe and **compare** actions ("I'm rolling my playdough too").

Being Creative

As your child 'makes a cake', she is engaging in simple **pretend play**. Your child might pretend to make a pizza, or create alligators, airplanes, or houses.

Science exploration

Young children learn about science through hands-on experiences. They learn by observing, talking about how materials **feel** and how they **change.** You can encourage scientific thinking. Provide **sawdust or sand** to add to the playdough and then **talk about how this new kind of dough looks and feels**. Introduce words like *smooth*, and *lumpy*.

Maths exploration

As well as the measuring etc during making playdough (which you can do together) , talk about **changes in shape and size** ("Mine is a little ball and yours is big"). Talk who has **more or less** playdough. Ask your child to **count** how many pieces she is making or to arrange by size or colour. Encourage mathematical thinking by

asking, “Which snake is longer?” or “ lets count how many pieces we have now.”

Physical development

While poking, rolling, and squishing playdough, your child **develops the small muscles in their fingers and hands.** They use hands, fingers, and tools to pound, push, poke, shape, flatten, roll, cut, and scrape. children develop eye-hand coordination, (**can they use both hands at once?**) the ability to **match hand movement with eye movement**. They also gain strength and improve dexterity in their hands and fingers.

You can explore hand under hand if necessary, and all exploration at any level is exciting, fun and a good learning experience.