

Playdough

Paraoa Poke



Playdough is a safe and soothing material and provides children with a great sense of security – it cannot be ‘done wrong’ and is a satisfying sensory experience. It is a useful material for arrival or when settling children. Children can help you make playdough. Although clay and playdough have similar purposes their textures, consistencies and smells are different, and because of this they appeal to children for different reasons.

Playdough / Paraoa Poke

Te Whāriki

Playdough can be used to support learning across all the strands of Te Whāriki. In particular, children's developing playdough capability is supported in the **Communication strand**, where they discover and develop different ways to be creative and expressive, and also in the **Exploration strand**, where children gain confidence in and control of their own bodies including active exploration with all the senses and the use of tools, materials and equipment to extend skills.

Settling to play with playdough can often provide children with a sense of security and a feeling of safety having started at playgroup. This supports the **Well-being strand**, where children's emotional well-being is nurtured and the **Belonging strand**, where children begin to feel comfortable with the routines, customs and regular events of their playgroup.



Playdough can help children to

- develop hand, eye, arm and body coordination and finger and hand muscles through squeezing, patting, pounding, rolling, poking and pinching, cutting with scissors
- dramatise about food and cooking and identify with the role of family cook
- be successful – playdough is easy to mould and manipulate
- be creative
- learn about science and maths – preparing, weighing, measuring
- feel settled and safe.



Adults can support children by

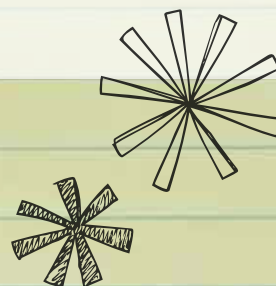
- providing clean, fresh playdough and changing it regularly
- involving them in making the dough and discussing things like colour and texture, and what happens when liquids are added
- making sure there is always dough available
- sitting at the table with them and having a conversation, singing, imagining
- joining in but not dominating play
- storing the dough in an airtight container to keep it fresh.

Providing for physical activity

Children may pat, pound, poke, pinch and squeeze playdough, break it into small pieces, roll, cut and make shapes out of it. Have a range of utensils and containers available for doing this. Child-sized table and chairs allow children to comfortably spend time with these materials. Dough needs to be soft and easy to work with. By breaking it into different-sized pieces, children can learn to combine different pieces to make different shapes. Dough play works well when close to family play equipment and blocks as children often like to role-play with dough.

Ideas for equipment

- tools for cutting, pressing and shape-making such as shape cutters, shells, garlic press, twigs, straws and rolling pins
- cooking utensils including pots and pans, bowls, measuring cups and cooking trays
- tea set
- props to encourage dramatic play such as animals, fences, dinosaurs and rocks.



Making dough

Here are two recipes for making playdough – cooked and uncooked. Children can help you make these.

Cooked Playdough

- 1 cup salt
- 2 cups flour
- 4 tsp cream of tartar
- 2 cups water
- 2 tbsp cooking oil
- food colouring

Mix dry ingredients together. Add water, oil and colouring. Blend until smooth. Stir over heat until mixture comes away from the sides, forming a ball. Tip the dough onto a board and knead well.

Uncooked Playdough

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup salt
- 1 cup water (hot water works best)
- 2 tbsp cooking oil
- 1 tsp food colouring

Put flour and salt in bowl. Mix water, oil and colouring and combine with dry ingredients. Knead well – extra flour may be required.

Add items such as essences and herbs for different smells and textures.

