Homemade Playdough

**The benefits of playing with playdough.**

We all know that play dough is fun and popular with young children, but apart from making a mess what is it really good for? Here are the fabulous benefits of allowing kids to play with play dough and the many learning opportunities that happen along the way!

Using play dough (or in fact any type of dough) with young children is beneficial for their development in so many ways.

Here are some ideas of how fabulous it is, divided into the areas of development that it helps:

**Fine motor development:**

The malleable properties of play dough make it fun for investigation and exploration as well as secretly building up strength in all the tiny hand muscles and tendons, making them ready for pencil and scissor control later on.

Poking in objects and pulling them out of play dough strengthens hand muscles and co-ordination

As part of simple, tactile play it can be squashed, squeezed, rolled, flattened, chopped, cut, scored, raked, punctured, poked and shredded! Each one of these different actions aids fine motor development in a different way, not to mention hand-eye co-ordination and general concentration.

Having a wide range of additional extras to use while playing extends the investigation and play possibilities endlessly. Poking in sticks provides a challenge and a new physical skill.

Squeezing through a garlic press leads to wonder and amazement at seeing it change shape, as well as using a gross motor movement to accomplish it.

Sticking in spaghetti requires a delicate hand and can lead to threading and stacking pasta shapes or beads over the top.

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**How will this educate my child?**

Providing boxes and containers with various shaped compartments can lead to cooking play, sorting, matching, ordering and counting, all naturally and without pressure to learn. By doing this it allows children to learn maths skills through play.

By providing objects from nature with a wide range of textures, colours and shapes, children can have multi-sensory experiences and engage with the world around them in a whole new way.

**How to make the best ever, no-cook play dough recipe in just 4 minutes, that will last for 6 months!**

**You need**:

2 cups plain flour (all purpose)

2 tablespoons vegetable oil (baby oil and coconut oil work too)

1/2 cup salt

2 tablespoons cream of tartar

1 to 1.5 cups boiling water (adding in increments until it feels just right)

gel food colouring (optional)

few drops glycerine (my secret ingredient for stretch and shine!)

**Method**:

Mix the flour, salt, cream of tartar and oil in a large mixing bowl

Add food colouring TO the boiling water then into the dry ingredients

Stir continuously until it becomes a sticky, combined dough

Add the glycerine (optional)

Allow it to cool down then take it out of the bowl and knead it vigorously for a couple of minutes until all of the stickiness has gone. This is the most important part of the process, so keep at it until it’s the perfect consistency!

If it remains a little sticky then add a touch more flour until just right.

You can store this play dough in an air tight container for at least 6 months.