

Benefits of play dough

- Enhances fine motor skill by building up strength in hand muscles and tendons. This also prepares hands for pencil and scissor control. As part of simple, tactile play dough can be squashed, squeezed, rolled, flattened, chopped, cut, scored, raked, punctured, poked and shredded. Objects can be poked into the dough and pulled out with fingers.
- Improves pre-writing skills. ...
- Creativity and imagination. ...
- Calming effect. ...
- Develops hand - eye coordination. ...
- Social skills. ...
- Increases curiosity and knowledge.

How to make your own playdough

You will need: 2 cups plain flour (all purpose), 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt, up to 1.5 cups boiling water (adding bit by bit until it feels just right), food colouring or paint (optional - this really can get messy!).

You might also want to use some household items like cookie cutters and rolling pins to make shapes with the playdough.

What to do:

1. Mix the flour, salt and oil in a large bowl. If you're using food colouring, add it to the boiling water then pour into the flour mixture.
2. Stir until it forms a sticky dough.
3. Allow it to cool down then take out of the bowl and knead it for a couple of minutes until all of the stickiness has gone.
4. Keep kneading until it's the perfect consistency! If it's still sticky add a little more flour until just right.

If the children want to keep the figures that you make, simply bake in a 250 degree oven for approximately one hour and hey presto, your play dough will harden!