



Activity ideas to support Learning at Home 2-5 year olds Early Years Service, Children's Services Buckinghamshire Council

Practice cutting with utensils

Let your child cut up playdough using cutlery and utensils (make sure these are child friendly).

Adding child scissors is a great way to develop cutting skills. A tricky challenge – see if your child can cut around the shape of something you have imprinted onto the dough.



Little Hands Ideas with dough

These recipes need some kitchen ingredients so you may need to plan ahead

Recycling Textures

Collect some plastic recycled packaging such as bottle lids, drinks bottle, cake/biscuit trays.

Roll out a ball of dough with your hands and push the patterned part of the packaging into it.

Start by one imprint and then talk about how it changes as you repeat.

Try adding some dried pasta pieces and make patterns.

Buried Treasure

Stuff your play dough ball full of small items such as coins, beads, Lego, mini toys. Ask your child to find all the treasures either with their eyes open or, for an extra tricky challenge, with their eyes closed?

Dancing Dough

Choose some fun songs and turn them up loud. Take individual balls of dough and adult sings out the instructions like you are in and gym class.

Roll the dough into a ball using both hands.

Poke the dough with each finger and thumb in turn to make holes in the dough. Make sure you swap hands, so all fingers and thumbs are used.

Squeeze the dough with all the fingers and thumb using a fist grip one hand at a time.

Sausage! Roll the play dough between both hands moving backwards and forwards to make a sausage.

Pancake! Hold the play dough in one hand and push the other hand flat into the play dough. Repeat this until the dough is flatter!

Pinch the dough. Hold the play dough in one hand and use Tom Thumb and Peter Pointer to pinch the dough. Then swap hands and repeat.

Animal, Monster or Fairy Magic

Model the play dough to make 3D models of your imaginary character.

Use these models to make believe and pretend.

Can you make up a story as your child's monster marches through the trees to catch a grumpy giant?

Or create a tea party for a fairy - What's their favourite food?

Squeeze and Snap Dough

You will need:

1 cup of cornflour, 2 tablespoons oil (to start with), 2 tablespoons of shampoo or washing up liquid (to start with).

To make:

Put the cornflour in a bowl, add the oil and stir (don't worry if it's lumpy). Add the shampoo /washing up liquid and mix together using hands to work it together – this is tricky, and you may need to add a little bit more oil or shampoo if it is dry.

The dough will end up smooth and silky.

Playdough recipe

You will need:

2 cups of flour, plus extra for dusting, 1 cup of salt, 2 cups of warm water, food colouring, 2 tablespoons vegetable oil

To make:

Mix the flour and salt in one bowl, and the water, oil and a few drops of food colouring in the other bowl.

Pour the oil, water and food colouring mix into the bowl with the flour. Use a wooden spoon to mix.

Dust your wooden chopping board with flour. Place the dough mix on top and knead for a few minutes until smooth and pliable.

Leave to cool completely and then your homemade playdough is ready for little hands!
Store in the fridge, in a bag, to keep it fresh. Wash hands after making and using the playdough.

Information for Parents & Carers

Keep in mind that playing with playdough always requires adult supervision. This is especially true if your child is still trying to put all sorts of things into their mouth.

Find out more

[Let's get talking - toddlers](#)

[Dough Disco](#)

[CBeebies Parenting](#)

[How to Make your Own Playdough - Sensory Play - BBC Tiny Happy People](#)

[Learning to talk - Start for Life - nhs.uk](#)

<https://wordsforlife.org.uk/>

[Home - Starting Reception](#)



Find out more about your child's development

[What to expect in the Early Years: A guide for parents](#)

If you have any concerns about your child's development the first thing you can do is chat to your child's Key Person at their setting.

Top Tips

Chatting Matters

Using playdough helps to strengthen muscles in children's hands, wrists and arms. This develops hand and eye coordination and is good preparation for the skills needed to use a pencil. But most of all it's fun for all ages!

Why not let your child help you make the dough. If your child doesn't get much practice using utensils for cutting during snack and mealtimes, then play dough time is the perfect time to bring out the child-safe forks and knives.

Expressive Arts and Design

3 and 4 year olds

You might notice that your child can:

Use some toys to make up a story. Notice the things that you do, like cooking and cleaning and pretends to do the same.

Physical Development

3 and 4 year olds

You might notice that your child can:

Use child scissors to make snips and understands that they need to be careful. Use either their left hand or my right hand more to hold things like utensils or scissors.

Do and undo fastenings on clothes themselves or able to use a knife and fork when eating as they are gaining strength in their hands.