Play Dough

Age: Preschool-age (3-4 years)

This activity helps your child's development in this domain: Physical

What You Need:

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup salt
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- Food coloring (optional)
- Measuring cup (plastic or metal)
- Mixing bowl
- Wooden spoon (optional)
- Plastic container with cover
- Wooden craft or Popsicle® stick, or smooth-edged plastic knife
- Cookie cutters

What To Do:

1. Show your child how to use the measuring cups and have her help you measure the flour, water, and salt. Thoroughly mix the ingredients with a wooden spoon or your hands until they form a ball. Add the oil and a few drops of food coloring (if you have some). Add a little more flour if the dough is sticky.
2. Place the dough on a clean table or counter top. Show your child how to knead the dough, then how to roll and shape it. Let her discover different ways to work with the dough. Show her how to use it to form letters, shapes, or numbers.
3. Have her flatten out the dough and give her some tools to work with, such as a wooden craft stick or Popsicle® stick for slicing, and plastic cookie cutters for cutting out shapes.
4. Name and count the shapes that she cuts out: “Wow, you cut out lots of circles. Let’s count them: 1, 2, 3, 4.”

5. Have her describe to you what she has made with her play dough or how the dough feels.

6. When she is done playing, store the play dough in an airtight plastic container.

! Safety Alert. Before you start, take a few moments to make sure the kitchen/work area is safe. Put away knives and other sharp or dangerous objects. Rather than doing things at a table, consider playing on the floor with your child. It’s a lot safer and more fun! A clean sheet placed on the floor will provide a sanitary work surface and catch all those spills for an easier cleanup when you’re done. Caution your child not to eat the play dough.