



Simply Sensational Sensory Activities for Preschool Children

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"A messy child is a happy child"



When I finger paint I am learning:

- To exercise my imagination and creativity.
- About how colors mix to form new colors.
- Concepts of shape, size and location
- Eye-hand coordination.
- An acceptable way to make a mess, and have fun sharing ideas with others who are near.

When I paint at the easel I am learning:

- To develop my imagination and creativity.
- Eye-hand coordination, helpful for learning to write.
- The names of colors and how to make new colors.
- To distinguish shapes and purposely create shapes.
- To notice patterns from background, necessary for mathematics.
- Concepts of symmetry balance and design.

When I play with glue, and collage materials I am learning:

- To exercise my imagination and creativity.
- Concepts of shape, size, location and design, relevant to learning to read.
- About things that are sticky, and things that are different textures.
- How to create patterns and designs, a math skill.
- To distinguish patterns from background, a reading skill.

When I scribble and draw I am learning:

- To hold a pencil or other drawing implement and to control the pressure.
- Eye-hand coordination.
- To exercise my creativity and imagination.
- That my ideas have value.
- Concepts of color, shape, size and location. Sometimes to express myself with words to describe my drawing.

COOKED PLAY-DOUGH RECIPIES

Play Dough Recipe 1

Mix: Dry ingredients

2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour

1-cup salt

1 tsp. alum

Mix: Liquid ingredients

1 cup Hot Water

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup oil

Mix dry and liquid. Add Jell-O for color /smell add glitter/sequins.

Play Dough Recipe 2

2 cups water

2 cups flour

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt

2 tbs cooking oil

2 tbs alum

Food coloring (optional)

Combine water, salt and food coloring. Boil until dissolved. Mix in cooking oil, and flour while water mixture is still very hot. Knead until smooth. Store in airtight container.

Favorite Play Dough Recipe 3

3 cups water

3 cups flour

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt

3 tbs baby oil

3 tbs cream of tartar

Food coloring

Mix ingredients in a saucepan until smooth. Cook over low to moderate heat until most of the play dough can stick together. Remove from pan and begin to knead play dough ASAP. Knead until play dough is pliable, even textured and fun to handle. Store in an airtight container and keep in refrigerator or a cold climate.

Play Dough Recipe 4

1 cup water

1 cup flour

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt

1 tbs oil

1 tbs alum

2 tbs vanilla

Food coloring (optional)

Mix dry ingredients together. Add oil and water. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until the consistency of mashed potatoes. Remove from heat and add vanilla and food coloring. Divide into balls and knead in color.

Play Dough Recipe 5

2 cups water

2 cups flour

1 cup salt

2 tbs cooking oil

4 tsp cream of tartar

Food coloring (optional)

Add food coloring to water if you wish to color the dough. Mix and heat until ingredients form a ball. Knead until smooth and store in airtight container.

Play Dough Recipe 6

1 cup water

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour

1 cup salt

Mix all ingredients in saucepan. Add food coloring if desired. Stir over low heat. When thick and rubbery, remove from heat. Spoon part of clay onto a floured table, roll out. Cut out model objects, dry objects for a few days. Use straws to punch holes for hanging, glue sequins to clay, pant, make beads and string on yarn, make a clay bowl by rolling clay into coils, press macaroni into sides before clay hardens.

Sparkling Salt Clay Recipe

1 cup cornstarch

About 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups cold water

2 cups salt

1 cup water

Mix and stir with set aside

Thin cornstarch with 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups cold water until it is as thick as gravy. Boil salt in 1 cup water. Add the cornstarch mixture to the boiling salt water, stirring constantly to avoid lumping. Cook until mixture forms a large mass. Turn out onto wax paper and cool. Store in an airtight container. This soft, cooked dough has a rubbery feel, like a soft gumdrop. Finished project may be dried in 250 degree oven for 1 hour, or allow to air dry.

Ceramic Dough

2 cups salt

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup of water

1 cup cornstarch

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cold water

Mix salt and $\frac{2}{3}$ cup water in a pan. Stir until well heated. Remove from heat. Mix cornstarch and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cold water. Stir quickly into first mixture. Mixture should be stiff dough. (Small objects take 2-3 days to dry)

Salt Ceramic

1 cup salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cornstarch

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup water

Mix all the ingredients and cook over medium heat. Stir constantly with the wooden spoon until the mixture thickens into a pure white glob. (One batch of this recipe makes a ball the size of a large orange.) Place the mixture on a piece of foil until cool. Knead thoroughly until soft and pliable. Sculpt any objects or designs. Embed feathers, toothpicks, pebbles or other embellishments while the ceramic is still soft. This material will dry to rock hardness without baking. For a shiny sculpture, an adult can coat finished dry objects with a clear glaze or fingernail polish.

Cornstarch & Salt Play Dough

Cold water

2 cups salt

1-cup cornstarch

Combine the salt with 2/3-cup water and bring to a boil. Mix the cornstarch with 2/3 cup water and stir until smooth. Combine the two mixtures.

This makes a smooth pliable almost spongy material that is easily manipulated. It must be kept in a plastic bag until the child is ready to use it. The completed object should be allowed to dry, then painted if desired. (You can even make children's handprints)

Cornstarch & Baking Soda Play Dough

(Pure white - hardens quickly)

1 cup cornstarch

2 cups baking soda

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups cold water

Combine all ingredients. Stir until smooth. Cook over medium heat until it reaches the consistency of dry mashed potatoes. Turn onto plate, covering with a damp cloth. When cool enough to handle, knead until smooth on cornstarch covered surface. Store in plastic bag. It has an unusual and appealing texture. Store it in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

Sand Modeling Dough

(Molds or models beautifully-stone like when dry)

3 cups sand

1 1/2 cups cornstarch

3 tsp alum

2 1/4 cups hot water

Food coloring (optional)

Mix sand, cornstarch, and alum in a saucepan. Add hot water and food coloring. Cook over medium heat until mixture thickens. Remove from heat knead until smooth. It makes grainy and stone like dough. Model or mold into objects, dry in sunshine for several days, store left over dough in airtight container. Air-dry for several days to produce hard stone like sculptures. It does not need shellac or varnish for protection.

Sand Castle Clay

1 cup sand $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cornstarch

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup liquid starch

Combine sand and cornstarch on a pot. Add liquid starch and mix. Cook the mixture over medium heat while constantly stirring. Eventually, the mixture will thicken and turn into dough. Remove pot from the stove and let sand castle clay cool. Remove clay from the pot and knead it 20-30 seconds before using. Let sand castle clay sculptures dry until hard. Color sand castle clay by adding 1 tbs of powdered tempera paint to the mixture before cooking.

Mud Like Play Dough

Mix: 3 cups water

3tbs oil

Brown tempera paint (dry or liquid)

Mix: 3 cups flour

2 tbs cream of tartar

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups salt

2-3 tbs. of coffee

Heat water, oil and tempera paint until boiling. While the above mixture is heating, combine flour, cream of tartar, salt and coffee in a large bowl. Carefully mix the wet and dry together. Knead until smooth.

Microwave Play Dough

1 cup flour

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt

2 tsp. Cream of tartar

Then add:

1 cup of water

1 tbs. Oil

Food coloring

Mix all ingredients together, put in a microwave for 30 seconds. Take out and stir. Repeat 6 more times, stirring after each 30 seconds in the microwave. Take out just before it looks done. Let sit for a minute and then knead it. 30 sec. is a bit too short to wait around. I do 40 sec. at a time. I have over cooked it. The last stage it is still a bit sticky but can be kneaded out. Above recipe doesn't make very much. I triple the above recipe.

UNCOOKED PLAY-DOUGH RECIPIES

Cornmeal Play Dough

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups white flour

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups cornmeal

1 cup salt

1 cup water

Food coloring

Mix all the dry ingredients in a bowl. Add the food coloring to the water and mix into the dry ingredients. Knead until pliable.

Oatmeal Play Dough

1 part flour

1 part water

2 parts oatmeal

Mix ingredients. This is NOT EDIBLE. Keep this one refrigerated otherwise you will have another science experiment.

Glue Play Dough

1 cup flour

1 cup cornstarch

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup white glue

water

Mix flour, cornstarch, and glue in a bowl. Add water as needed. Knead until workable, model and explore dough freely.

Cornstarch Play Dough

1 cup cold water

1 cup salt

2 tsp oil

3 cups flour

2 tbs cornstarch

Powdered paint

In a bowl mix the water, salt, oil and enough powdered paint to make a bright color.

Gradually work flour and cornstarch into the mixture until it reaches a bread dough consistency and knead it.

Sand Play Dough

4 cups clean sand

3 cups flour

1 cup water

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup oil

Combine all ingredients together in a bowl. Knead it until it forms a ball. Add more water if too dry or more flour if it's too wet. The children love this dough, it combines sand table play and play dough, they never want to put it away. Good for children that are very tactile.

Bead Clay

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup flour

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cornstarch

Warm water

Mix flour, salt and cornstarch in a bowl. Add warm water gradually until mixture forms a shape then knead. Make beads, pierce with toothpicks, and allow to dry, paint and string.

Vinegar Play Dough

3 cups flour

1 cup salt

1 cup water

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup oil

2 T. vinegar

Mix all ingredients in bowl. Add more water if necessary, knead. Keeps well in plastic bag. Knead water into dough to refresh.

PLAY DOUGH CAN BE BAKED

Cotton Ball Play Dough

1-cup flour

$\frac{3}{4}$ to 1-cup water

1 bag of cotton balls (any color)

Mix flour and water together until you get a smooth paste. Dip the cotton balls into the paste. Form into desired shapes. Place on cookie sheet and cook at 325 degree for 1 hour until lightly brown and hard. Let cool. Paint creations with tempera paint.

Salt Play Dough

1-cup salt

4 cups flour

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups water

4tbs.oil

Mix flour and salt. Add water and oil slowly to the dry ingredients, stirring with a spoon until well blended. Knead dough until soft and pliable. Sculpt objects or use cookie cutters to cut shapes. Bake 45 minutes in 350 oven until hard. Paint with acrylic or varnish to seal. Also, you can use cookie cutters or mold Salt Clay by hand, then bake in a 300 degree oven for use in creating refrigerator magnets, jewelry, ornaments, key chains, necklaces, and more.

Play Dough Can Be Baked

1-cup salt

4 cups flour

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups water

1tsp. alum

Small pebbles, macaroni, buttons

Condensed Milk

Food Coloring (optional)

Preheat oven to 250 degrees. Mix together flour, salt, and enough water to make stiff dough. Provide macaroni, buttons, and similar materials for children to press into their dough shapes. Bake completed dough models for one hour. For an antiqued effect, brush on condensed milk before baking, or use a mixture of condensed milk and food coloring.

Applesauce Cinnamon Play Dough

This is a great idea to use with pre-schoolers and early elementary age children. There are no specified amounts that I have used. Place at least a cup of applesauce into a bowl and then begin to add cinnamon until you have a dough mixture. It takes quite a bit of cinnamon. The dough will be soft and easy to form into shapes. It also smells great. Allow the children to make shapes using their hands or cookie cutters and then set aside to dry. If you leave them out to the air it could take up to a week for the dough to completely dry. I often place them in the oven on low for a couple of hours after a day or so and that will help the dough dry faster. These make great holiday gifts.

Cinnamon Play Dough

2 cups flour

1 cup salt

5 tsp. Cinnamon

$\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 cup warm water

Mix flour, salt, and cinnamon in bowl. Make a well in center, pour in water, and mix hands until dough forms a ball. Knead on lightly floured board until smooth and satiny about 5 minutes.

Wrap in plastic and refrigerate 20 minutes before using. Use as any clay. Excellent for cookie cutter ornaments rolled $\frac{3}{4}$ ' thick, bake 350 1 hour until it is hard.

Flubber

2 cups white glue

1 1/2 cups water for mixing with glue

1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups 20 Mule Team borax

1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups water for mixing with borax

Food coloring

Mix together the glue and 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of water in a large mixing bowl. Add food coloring to desired color. Mix together the borax and 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups water in a separate bowl until the borax is mostly dissolved. Pour $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the borax/water mixture into the glue/water mixture. Gather the flubber from the glue/water mixture and wring out excess water out of it. Knead the flubber until it is smooth. Repeat pouring the borax/water mixture into the glue/water mixture until all of the materials are used up. If the flubber is too sticky or wet knead it with some flour.

Silly Putty

1 cup liquid starch

2 cups white school glue

Food coloring

Mix and knead the mixture by hand until the starch is completely absorbed and the color is even. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator. Have fun stretching, molding and bouncing.

Goop

1 lb. Box cornstarch

2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups water

Pour cornstarch into a bowl. Add water and mix by hand. Watch how the mixture turns from solid to liquid in your hands.

Dyed Pasta or Rice

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup rubbing alcohol

Food Coloring

Small bowl or zip lock bags

Dry pasta or rice

Newspaper

Mix the alcohol and food coloring in a small bowl or zip lock bag. Add small amounts of dry pasta to the liquid and mix it gently. The larger pasta, the longer it will take absorb the color. Dry the dyed pasta on newspaper.

Clean Mud

1 cup ivory snow laundry soap
5-6 rolls shredded toilet paper
Water

Pour the soap over the toilet paper. Add small amounts of water and mix with hands until mixture becomes soft and squishy. Smells Great! We used this during our winter theme as snow. We also put plows and tractors into the mixture and pretended to plow the snow with the tractors.

Wet Chalk Drawing

Sugar solution (1/3 cup sugar and 1 cup water)
Sidewalk chalk
Paper

Soak sidewalk chalk overnight in sugar solution. Draw with the wet chalk on paper. The sugar-water helps brighten the chalk colors and keeps the drawing from smearing as much. Dry the completed art project. You can also dip the end of dry chalk into the sugar solution and draw with the dampened chalk.

Paint Dough

Mix equal parts of flour, salt and water to form a paste consistency. Add liquid tempera paint to desired color. Make several different colors. Pour each paint mixture into a plastic squeeze bottle. Squeeze paint onto the poster board to make designs. Dry the completed project. The salt gives the designs a glistening crystal quality when dry.

Puffy Paint

Elmer's glue
Shaving cream
Powdered tempera paint

Mix equal amounts of glue and shaving cream together. Add the powdered tempera paint to mixture. When paint is applied to paper, it will dry puffy. Especially fun to paint with fingers or q-tips.

Tissue Collage

Cut several colors of art tissue papers into squares, triangles, rectangles or any shapes from one to three inches in size. Place the shapes on a tray. Dip a paintbrush into liquid starch and brush it on the paper or paper plate. Press a piece of tissue into the starch. Paint a little more starch over the tissue paper. Continue adding more and more pieces of tissue paper and starch, overlapping them to create new colors. The artist may choose to cover all or part of the background. Dry the project completely.

Tissue Stain

Place torn bits of colored tissue paper on the paper or cardboard. Spray water on the tissue pieces. Use a wet paintbrush to enhance the staining from the tissues. Remove or peel away the wet tissue pieces and a stained design will be left behind. Dry the project completely. Children can add more colors after the design

Mystery Paint

Dissolve 4 tbs baking soda in 4 tbs water in a cup. Dip the cotton swab in the mixture and paint and invisible picture on the white paper. Dry the artwork completely. Brush the watercolor paint over the paper to reveal the mystery picture. Children can create a secret picture for a friend to reveal with watercolor paint.

Shiny Painting

Make the paint mixture of liquid tempera paint (or food coloring) and corn syrup. Place the paint in small containers. Paint freely with the mixture using any painting approach on paper or cardboard.

Glossy Paint

Mix different color of food coloring with condensed milk in small cups. Use a paintbrush or a cotton swab to paint the shapes in different colors. While the paint is still wet, hang the shapes on a wall with pushpins so the paint colors will run together. A fence or bulletin board works too. Dry the art for several days.

Tape and Chalk Stencil

Apply masking tape to the matte board or cardboard in any design. Rub chalk on a damp sponge or draw designs on a damp sponge. Press the chalked sponge all over the taped matte board or cardboard. The chalk will stick to the paper. Peel off the masking tape and a stencil design from the tape will be left. The same project can be done with masking tape and watercolor paint. You can also use clear contact paper instead of masking tape.

Bubble Art

You will need: food coloring dish detergent (or bubble solution) water, cups, paper, and straws.

Give each child a cup filled with colored bubble/water and a straw, and place a piece of paper under their cups. For the fun part, have all the children blow bubbles until the whole paper completely covered with bubbles.

Rainbow Stew

In a saucepan mix 4 cups of water, 1 cup of cornstarch and 1/3 cup of sugar. Cook over medium heat stirring frequently. Mixture will be come "jelly" like. Divide into 3 separate bowls. Let cool!!! Add red food coloring to one bowl, blue to the other, and yellow in the last. Place 1 tablespoonful of each color into zip lock bags, zip and seal with tape. Then squish the colors to mix the colors of the rainbow!

Epsom Salt Mixture

1 cup Epsom salt

1 cup boiling water

Mix the Epsom salt and water together until the salt is completely dissolved. Use this mixture as paint, and paint it onto any shape you choose. We used it to paint on construction paper snowflakes, and the mixture dried glossy!

Sidewalk Paint

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup cornstarch

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup water

Food Coloring

Mix cornstarch and water in a cup. Add food coloring until you achieve your desired color. Mix together and use mixture to paint on the sidewalk. When the paint dries, it looks like chalk, and washes off with water.

Resource List

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Sensory activities for children of all ages, including babies, toddlers, preschoolers. Also includes holidays, seasons, and themed sensory activities! Including Sensory Activities in Preschool. Olympic Sensory Backyard Summer Camp. Sensory Activities for All Children. Here are some specific sensory activities for each of the sensory systems. I have not written posts for each one yet, but I will add them here as I do. With multiple sensory activities for pre-schoolers, young children can grow up and explore their bodies in an exciting way. 25 Sensory Activities for Children. Here are sensory activities for kindergarteners and those in preschool that have been segregated based on each type of sense. Touch. 1. Cornmeal Explorers. What You Need. A tub filled with cornmeal. Some old cups, forks, and spoons. How To Do.