

# Every Child Ready to Read @ Dallas®

## Playing with Clay

By Holly Lapinski

**Links to Literacy:** This activity gives children another way to learn better shapes and letter-sound relationships.

### What you'll need:

- Play dough or self hardening clay, or bake in the oven clay (store bought or homemade - recipes below)
- Surface to work on (for easy clean up use plastic place mats or plastic flannel backed table cloth)
- Assorted cookie cutters
- Assorted objects to make texture (suggestions: rubber stamps (no ink), spongy stamps, forks, spoons, plastic necklaces, rolling pin)

### What to Do:

Roll, flatten, pinch, shape, cut, stamp and/or texture your clay to make shapes, objects, or words that relate to the story you are reading together or rhymes that you recite or sing. Squish them up and start again if using play dough, air dry, or bake depending on the clay you and your child have chosen to work with.

### Variations:

For younger children, make cut out hands by flattening the clay and having your child hold his hand on the clay while you draw around it with a pen. Press hard enough that the pen cuts the clay. Have your cut out hands holding washable objects or use them to make birds, animals, flowers, etc.

For older children, start to form letters by writing with snakes (rolls or ropes of clay called coils). Form things that start with that letter or spell out the words. Make and/or write a word that rhymes with the first word. Examples: Spell b-o-x and make a box, then make/write f-o-x and then make a fox. You can change the first letters to help them see it is the same root. Make your favorite things out of clay and use them to tell a story.

### Notes:

Play dough, air dry clay and bake in the oven clay can be found at your local craft/hobby store or in the children's activity section at your local super store.

### Homemade Clay Recipes

Use a plastic bowl and spoon for mixing up these easy clay recipes. For even color distribution, add color to the water before mixing with dry ingredients. Alum can be found in the baking section of your local supermarket and acts as a preservative. Store clay in reseal able plastic bags or containers.

#### Play Clay

2 cups flour  
1 cup salt  
6 Tablespoons alum  
2 Tablespoons salad oil  
1 cup water  
Food coloring or package of unsweetened Kool-aid

Mix dry ingredients and then add water with color added if desired. Mix together until smooth.

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## Playing with Clay (continued)

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### Air Dry Clay

4 cups flour

1 teaspoon alum

1 ½ cups salt

1 ½ cups water

Clay can be dyed with food color before forming or painted after dry

Mix salt, flour and alum in a bowl. Add water gradually to form a ball. Knead (roll, pound and pull) adding water until it no longer falls apart. Store clay in the refrigerator. Use at room temperature. Let finished projects dry at room temperature (about days) It will become hard and can be painted.

### Salt Dough

¾ cup water

3 Tablespoons of salt

1 teaspoon cooking oil

1/3 cup water

Food color or paint

Mix together all ingredients (except water) in a bowl with your hands. Add water a little at a time until the dough is smooth and doesn't stick to the side of the bowl. If it gets too sticky add a little flour. If it is too crumbly add more water. Sprinkle flour on the table, a mat or board and knead until smooth.

Dough can be stored in a sealed bag or container in the refrigerator for a couple of days. Bake in preheated 250 degree oven for about 3 hours until firm. Baking times will vary depending on the size and thickness of your object. Make sure it is hard all through. Cool before painting.

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