

Playdough and Word Work Center: Make "Heart" Words



For free playdough recipe see www.nellieedge.com

- Children love reading the picture recipe and making new batches of playdough each month. (An electric skillet works well in the classroom.)
- Children can make "heart" words from coils of playdough. As they create the words they will be remembering the spelling songs and chants.
- Provide a file of the first set of laminated "heart" words as models: I, love, you, Mom, Dad, cat...
- Give children 8.5" x 11" laminated pages with the word and finger spelling printed in black. **Playdough Word Work Mats are available online** for members at nellieedge.com.
- Consider limiting the center to four students.

- Provide a basket with rolling pins and tongue depressors as playdough tools to help shape each word. Children can read their "heart" word!



Tips on Using Playdough: Give Children Hands-On Learning in a Social Context

Playdough is a staple item in many preschools, kindergartens and home kitchens. It is easy to make and – properly stored – keeps for months. Playdough develops small finger muscles for writing and provides a rich social context for language and concept development. Keep an enlarged laminated copy of the picture recipe readily available. You and the children will want to make it often.

Download picture recipes from
www.nelliedge.com/catalog/cookbooks.asp.

Tips on using playdough:

- In the classroom, cooking playdough on an electric skillet may be safer than using a heavy pan on a burner.
- Make double batches and divide it into little balls. Put each one in a resealable bag as a gift for children at the end of the year or for a holiday. (Add popsicle sticks – inch size, clean rocks, plastic animals, cookie cutters, rolling pins, etc. for a play kit.)
- Children enjoy coloring and “flavoring” the dough with food coloring and cooking extracts or packages of flavored Kool-Aid. Enjoy the aroma.
- Every few weeks – or months make new playdough and change the accompanying play props to correspond to thematic studies. (i.e. birds, farm animals, insects, etc.)
- When learning about primary colors and secondary colors, let the children experiment by combining blue and yellow playdough to produce green.
- Extend Mother Goose rhymes with playdough by adding a few carefully chosen props, such as plastic people and animals, buildings, or clean polished rocks. “Children, see if you can create a scene from a Mother Goose rhyme!”
- At an open house, invite parents to make playdough with their children and take it home.
- Playdough stays on the tray on the table! This essential rule simplifies life with playdough, keeping it off carpets and shoes. We recommend using cafeteria style trays which you can find at a restaurant supply house – or ask your friendly school cooks. When not in use, playdough is always kept in a labeled clear plastic container with a tight lid. The number of trays determines how many children can socialize and learn together at the playdough table/center.