

# Playdough and Word Work Center: Make "Heart" Words



For free playdough recipe see [www.nellieedge.com](http://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](http://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.nellieedge.com/catalog/cookbooks.asp](http://www.nellieedge.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 Aide. 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 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 play dough, keeping it off carpets and shoes. We recommend using cafeteria style trays which you can find at a restaurant supply houses – 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.

