



SPEECH AND LANGUAGE
THERAPY PRACTICE

Teaching Language Skills Through Play: Play-dough

In order to promote language development and successful play skills you need to incorporate the following when engaging in play with your child:

- Model language and appropriate play for your child to copy.
- Join your child at play. Your child is more likely to respond if you are engaging with a toy / activity that they are interested in.
- Comment on what you and your child are doing. Your comments should be short and focused on their play.

Below are some ideas you can use when you are playing play-dough with your child. Pick a couple of ideas that you feel comfortable with and give them a go!

- Encourage your child to pick out and sort the play-dough by colour.
- Provide the language models for everything you are doing e.g. rolling, cutting, squeezing, pulling, pinching, and poking. You can even turn it into a song “This is the way we roll play-dough, roll play-dough, roll play-dough, this is the way we roll play-dough in the afternoon time” (to “The Wheels on the Bus” tune).
- Be creative in the things that you mold together e.g. making animals, flowers, people, snowmen etc. Ask your child to guess what you have made and vice versa.
- Use cookie cutters to make a variety of shapes and items and encourage your child to name them with you.
- Cut out the same shape (e.g. square) using three different colours and introduce a game where your child has to order the shapes depending on the colours you name.
- Make three balls – one big, one medium, and one small – encourage your child to sort them from smallest to largest. You can also introduce concepts such as, bigger than vs. smaller than / long vs. short / lumpy vs. smooth etc.

Here is a quick and easy play-dough recipe:

- 2 cups of baking soda
- 1 ½ cups of water
- 1 cup of corn starch
- A few drops of food colouring

Mix ingredients with a fork until smooth. Boil until thick. Store in an airtight container.

Check out the other Speak To Me “Teaching Language Skills Through Play” worksheets for more ideas to try at home.