

Paint, Paste, Play Dough, Puppets and Paper Maché

Creative Activity Ideas for Young Children

Flour and Salt Finger Paint, Cooked

2 cups flour
3 cups cold water
2 teaspoons salt
2 cups hot water
coloring

Add salt to flour, pour in cold water gradually and beat mixture with egg beater until smooth. Add hot water, mix together and bring to a boil. Boil until it becomes glossy. Beat until smooth, then mix in coloring. Add additional water (up to 1 cup) to thin to desired consistency.

Flour and Salt Finger Paint, Uncooked

1 cup flour
1 cup water
1½ teaspoons salt
coloring

Combine flour and salt; add water. Add desired coloring and mix together. This finger paint has a grainy quality unlike the other finger paints, providing a different sensory experience.

Cornstarch Finger Paint

½ cup boiling water
6 tablespoons cold water
2 tablespoons cornstarch
coloring

Dissolve cornstarch in cold water in a cup. Add this mixture to boiling water, stirring constantly. Heat until it becomes glossy. Add color.

Note: cooling causes paint to thicken slightly. 1 to 2 tablespoons more water can be added if it is too thick.



Easy Finger Painting

clear liquid detergent (or liquid starch)
dry tempera paint

Squirt liquid detergent on paper. Stir in about 1 teaspoon of dry paint, using caution not to breathe in the paint dust. Paint on paper. For a change, paint directly on a durable, scrubable surface, such as an old plastic tablecloth. After the design has been made, lay the paper on the finger paint and rub. Lift off carefully.

Variety Painting

For a change, try using household implements to paint or print with. Try a comb, an old toothbrush, string, an old toy wheel, vegetables cut in half with a shape carved out, sponges, a wadded bit of paper towel, alphabet letters and other safe items from

the kitchen drawer. Try different motions, such as pulling the object across the paint, or quickly dabbing onto the paper. Try spatter painting and block painting. Finished paper can be used to cover wastebasket, to wrap packages, or for greeting cards.

Flour Paste

Mix together $\frac{1}{4}$ cup flour and enough cold water to make a creamy mixture. Boil over slow heat for 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Cool. Add cold water to thin if necessary.

Cooked Dough I

4 tablespoons cornstarch
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup boiling water
3 to 5 drops of food coloring (optional)

Mix cornstarch and salt in pot. Add color if desired. Pour in boiling water, stirring until soft and smooth. Place pot over medium heat and stir until mixture forms a soft ball (approximately 2 to 3 minutes). Cool and knead with hands several minutes. If dough sticks to fingers, dust hands with cornstarch. Some recipes recommend adding a few drops of cooking oil to delay drying, or storing in an airtight container for later use. Shaped figures dry in two days or in the oven for 1 hour on low heat (approximately 225°F).

Cooked Dough II

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cornstarch (blend with $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cold water)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt
2 cups boiling water
3 to 5 drops of food coloring (optional)

Add salt to boiling water. Combine flour with cornstarch and water. Pour hot mixture into cold. Put in double boiler over hot water. Cook and stir until glossy. Cool overnight. Knead in additional flour until dough is the right consistency, adding food color if desired.

Note: A similar recipe uses only $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cornstarch and specifies $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the cold water.)

Uncooked Play Dough

3 cups flour
1 cup water
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup salt
1 tablespoon oil
3 to 5 drops of food coloring (optional)

Mix flour with salt; add water with coloring and oil gradually. Add more water if dough is too stiff; add more flour if too sticky. Let the children help with the mixing and measuring. Keep dough stored in plastic bags or a covered container in a cool place.

Note: Some sources suggest the finished products can be baked at 225°F for 2 hours and then decorated, if desired.

Salt Dough

1 cup salt
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cold water
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cornstarch

Combine all ingredients in a double boiler placed over medium heat. Stir the mixture constantly for about 2 or 3 minutes until it becomes so thick that it follows the spoon. When the consistency is similar to bread dough, turn it out onto wax paper or aluminum foil to cool. When cool, knead for several minutes and it's ready to use. This dough may be kept several days if stored in airtight container.

Note: A similar recipe calls for $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cold water and recommends a few drops of cooking oil to delay drying. Finished molded figures will need two days or 1 hour in the oven on very low temperature (approximately 225°F) to dry.

Favorite Play Dough

1 cup flour
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt
1 tablespoon oil
1 teaspoon cream of tartar
1 cup water
3 to 5 drops food coloring (optional)

Mix all dry ingredients in a saucepan. Add liquids and cook approximately 3 minutes until mixture pulls away from pan and a ball forms. Empty onto the counter top and knead. Dough can be stored in an airtight container for many days.

Note: A similar recipe uses 2 teaspoons cream of tartar.

Variety Doughs

For a fun change, try adding sawdust, coffee grounds, cornmeal or oatmeal, which create interesting textures. Flavorings such as orange, lemon, mint or almond create different smells.

Puppets

Create puppets from small paper bags, old socks, empty toilet paper tubes or empty plastic containers. Add fabric, buttons, bits of string, paint and colored paper to create a special puppet.

Gluing

Create great collages by gluing magazine or greeting card pictures and assorted cast off materials on paper or cardboard. Collect string, old ribbons, cellophane, tissue paper, confetti, seeds, cotton, fur, wool, yarn, doilies, cupcake papers, eggshells, packing material, leathers, grass, twigs, leaves, shells, sawdust, wood and fabric scraps to create attractive designs when glued in place.

Paper Maché

Tear old newspapers into 1- to 1½-inch strips. Stir a small amount of flour into a cup of cold water to make soupy mixture. Dip the strips of newsprint in the flour and water paste and arrange on a balloon frame (or use a paper bag full of air, stapled shut; a clean, empty plastic container with lid; or a chicken wire base). Allow each layer of newspapers to dry thoroughly before adding the next layer.

Note: Older children may like to add legs by taping on empty cardboard tubes, or other containers to add shape to the product.

Crayon Fun

Crayon rubbings are made by rubbing the side of a small piece of peeled crayon over a textured cutout, leaf or other interesting shape or surface. Try corrugated cardboard cutouts placed on a clean surface and covered with a sheet of clean paper. Have the child hold both pieces firmly in place while rubbing across the top paper with the flat crayon.

Old crayons can be shaved with the blade of blunt scissors onto a sheet of waxed paper. Fold the paper in half and have an adult press with a warm iron, protecting the iron with an old cloth. For variety, arrange bits of tissue paper, colored cellophane or fall leaves between the pieces of waxed paper before pressing.

Multicolored Crayon

Have an adult *partially* melt bits of peeled scrap crayons in an old tin can in a pan of warm water on low heat. Be sure enough is melted to hold the crayon together. Pour into well-greased, small, heat-proof, throw-away container and cool away from children. When firm, unmold to produce a large multicolored “new” crayon.

Crayon Resistant Painting

After drawing a picture with heavy crayon strokes, the child paints over the drawing with thin dark-colored paint. The dark color fills in all the areas that the crayon has not covered, producing the feeling of a night picture.

Creative Story Writing

Sometimes children enjoy telling an adult about their pictures. Print what the child says and then read it back to the child. The child will have great fun seeing the original story in words.

Creating to Music

Put on a record or tape and add music to the art experience. Children will enjoy painting to the rhythm and mood of the music.

For Further Information

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