

# Children's Centre Make and Play



Giving kids the best  
**start**  
in life!

Sure Start Children's Centres are a 'one-stop shop' for children under five and their families, where skilled staff are on hand to give help and advice.

You can go there for:

- health advice
- parenting and family support
- play sessions and childcare
- help to get a job or training
- a place to meet other parents

Thousands of mums, dads and children across the country are already enjoying the benefits.



To find your nearest children's centre call: **01429 284284**

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## Cooked Play-Dough

Mix flour, salt and cream of tartar in a large saucepan. Blend water and oil together in a bowl. Add to the saucepan and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until it thickens. Add several drops of food colouring until you get the right colour. Cook for about five minutes. Take the play dough out of the saucepan and put it on a cutting board or counter and knead for a few minutes. Add flour if it's too sticky.



This play dough should last around three months if you keep it sealed in an airtight container or plastic ziplock bag. It's so smooth and fun to play with when it's warm.

**3 cups flour**  
**1 cup salt**  
**6 teaspoons cream of tartar**  
**3 cups water**  
**3 tablespoons vegetable oil**  
**Food colouring**

## No Fuss Play-Dough

In a large bowl, mix together water, salt, oil and a few drops of food colouring. Mix flour and cornstarch and add  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup at a time, stirring constantly (you may need a little more or a little less than 2 cups of flour so make sure you stir in until it is the right consistency). Knead for a few minutes with flour on your hands.

**1 cup cold water**  
**1 cup salt**  
**2 teaspoons vegetable oil**  
**2 cups flour**  
**2 tablespoons cornstarch**  
**Food colouring**

## Oatmeal Play-Dough

Mix everything together in a large bowl. Then knead for a few minutes. This play-dough has a nice lumpy texture.

Smelly tip: for a nice smelling play-dough, add a few drops of vanilla extract, almond extract, or peppermint extract to any of these play-dough recipes.

**1 cup flour**  
**1 cup water**  
**2 cups oatmeal**

## Baked Craft Clay

Mix together and knead until smooth. Separate into parts, and add a few drops of different colours of food colouring. Make shapes and brush egg over the top. Put shapes on a cookie sheet and bake in the oven at 300°F for about one hour until the clay is golden. Seal with shellac to make shiny. Paint.

**4 cups flour**  
**1 cup salt**  
 **$\frac{1}{2}$  cups water**  
**2 tablespoons vegetable oil**  
**Food colouring**  
**1 egg, beaten**



## No Bake Craft Clay

Mix together and add food colouring. Refrigerate for a few hours. Store in an airtight container or plastic ziplock bag.

2½ cups flour  
1 cup salt  
1 cup water  
Food colouring

## Homemade Clay

Mix salt and ¾ of a cup of water in a saucepan over medium heat for about 5 minutes, stirring constantly.

Remove from heat. Add cornstarch and ½ cup water. Stir and heat again on medium heat until smooth and thick. Refrigerate for a few hours. Store in airtight plastic ziplock bag.

2 cups salt  
¾ cup water  
1 cup cornstarch  
½ cup water

## Cinnamon Apple Clay

Mix together in a bowl and add food colouring. Refrigerate for a few hours until the clay is firm.

1 cup apple sauce  
1 cup flour  
1 cup cinnamon  
½ cup white school (PVA) glue  
Food colouring





## Why Make Play-Dough or Clay?

1. It is lots of fun!
2. Dough is easy to handle and move around, which makes it good for little hands. If you make a stiff dough, it also requires strength to manipulate
3. It develops handling skills in itself and also with the addition of tools such as cutters, rolling pin and a knife
4. It provides early experiences of measuring, volume and capacity as children pour, mix and knead
5. It strengthens understanding as children discover for themselves what happens when they mix ingredients together and see a change happening
6. It helps develop independence, confidence and choice making as children can decide for themselves which ingredients to add and when to add them
7. It is exciting and provides exploratory opportunities
8. It is a good source for imaginative play, e.g. children pretending to cook
9. It can be soothing and comforting
10. It can introduce children to following recipes, if they help make the dough. clay or slime
11. It can help to develop creativity as children mould, form and explore changing shapes and move to representational model making





## Silly Play Gloop

In a mixing bowl, add 2 cups corn flour and 1 cup water. Mix until it becomes liquid. Pour liquid in a saucepan on low heat and add the 3 cups of flour. Mix while gradually adding water.

2 cups corn flower  
2 cups warm water  
3 cups flour

## Silly Slime

Mix together room temperature water, glue and food colouring in a medium bowl. Set aside. In another bowl, mix together warm water and Borax until completely dissolved. Next, slowly pour the glue into the second bowl with Borax solution, but do not mix them together. Roll the glue mix around the Borax solution (around 4 or 5 times). Then lift the glue mix out of the Borax solution. Knead for 2-3 minutes. Store the slime (the glue mix) in an airtight container or plastic ziplock bag.

1 cup room temperature water  
1 cup white school (PVA) glue  
Food colouring  
1½ cups warm water  
4 tablespoons Borax  
Laundry Booster





## Homemade Silly Putty

Mix together and set aside until dry. Store in an airtight container.

2 cups white school  
(PVA) glue  
1 cup liquid starch

## Why Make Slime?

1. It provides masses of enjoyment and excitement when exploring this material
2. It is lovely feeling the 'stickiness' and 'sliminess'
3. It offers the opportunity to observe/take part in following a recipe and to observe how different ingredients make a completely new substance when mixed together
4. It provides the opportunity to enrich and extend children's language
5. It offers the opportunity for maths – measuring out quantities, talking about how much etc.
6. It can be very calming and soothing







## Sand and Washing-up Liquid

Experiment with various amounts of sand and washing-up liquid

Why Play with Sand and Washing-up Liquid?

1. It provides opportunities for comparing and contrasting gritty and soft textures
2. It offers lots of scope for language and talking about textures and feelings
3. It offers the opportunity for experimentation – How much sand? How much liquid? What will happen if I whisk really fast?
4. The mixture feels lovely and children gain a lot of enjoyment from swishing it around – it offers emotional release
5. It offers exploration of new and exciting materials. Children realise they have the power to mix together two materials, see a change and make a new material

## Dry Grains

Let children play with pasta, porridge, cereals, soup mix, lentils, pebbles etc. Vary the dry ingredients and add a range of spoons, containers, small bottles, bottle tops etc

Why Play with Dry Ingredients:

1. It gives children the opportunity to handle and explore different materials. This handling encourages their natural curiosity and helps children learn a lot about colour, shape, texture, size and contrast in a playful way
2. It offers opportunities to group, classify, gather, sort, share and count. They can carry and lift materials, talk about how much and how heavy?
3. It helps develop physical skills. In handling the material children develop their grip and movement of hands, fingers and arms. They develop control and precision in their scooping and pouring
4. It offers the opportunity for children to talk about what they can see, hear, touch and smell

## Soaked, Cooked and Coloured Pasta

Cook or leave to soak overnight, long spaghetti or pasta shapes, add food colouring and oil to the water.

Why Play with Cooked and Coloured Pasta?

1. It looks very exciting
2. It feels wonderful
3. It provides lots of opportunities for descriptive language
4. It is good for imaginative play, e.g. pretending to cook or play with worms
5. It provides an opportunity for children to handle interesting materials and have a good time making a mess
6. It is good for the development of all the senses – add food flavourings to make it smell interesting
7. It is good for the development of handling skills when using the materials with forks, spoons sieves and chopsticks





## Cooking Oil and Water

Clear containers allow the children to observe the mixing and separating of the oil and water. If they dip in pieces of fabric, they can observe the liquids being absorbed or not. Try dropping powder paints into the oil and water mixture.

**Oil**  
**Water**  
**Food colouring**  
**Food essences**  
**Small spoons and scoopers**  
**Small clear containers**  
**Piece of fabric and paper**

Why Play with Oil and Water?

1. It offers a lovely, exciting, slippery experience
2. It offers lots of opportunity to use and develop new vocabulary
3. It is very scientific and children can learn a lot about materials, mixing, absorption, floating and movement in a fun way
4. It is a calming activity and children can concentrate very deeply as they move and handle the two very different liquids

Find out about your local Children's Centre services by contacting:

Hindpool Children's Centre on 01429 292555

or

Rossmere Children's Centre on 01429 292444.

You can also find us on Facebook by searching Hartlepool Children's Centres

**The Children's Hub**  
Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees

*Hartlepool*  
**Breastfeeding**

A stylized logo for breastfeeding, featuring a yellow circle above a white circle, with a yellow breast shape between them.

**HARTLEPOOL**  
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