

“In the Human Body”

EXPLORE IT

Module 15, Scented Playdough

Prompt:

Humans have five basic senses-- can you name them all?

Make your own playdough and explore the sense of smell. You'll also need to use almost all of your senses.... you might use your sight to read the instructions, your hearing to listen to your grownup, and your touch to knead the playdough. You probably won't taste anything... but maybe?

Use tools, toys, and the muscles in your hands and fingers to play with your creation. What different textures can you make? Can you create a fancy smelling self portrait?

Materials:

- 1 Small Bowl
- 1 Medium Bowl
- 2 Mixing Spoons
- Measuring Cups
- Measuring Spoons
- Tools for exploring playdough. Some options include:
 - Cookie cutters
 - Fork and spoon
 - Rolling pin
 - Potato masher
 - [Spreader \(the safe kind\)](#)
 - Toothpicks or wooden skewers
 - Kid scissors
 - Pipe cleaners
 - Popsicle sticks
 - Straws
 - Buttons

Playdough Ingredients:

- 2 cups flour
- ½ cup salt
- 1 cup warm water
- 3 teaspoons cooking oil
- 1 tablespoon of a scent of your choice (we recommend hot cocoa, pumpkin spice, cinnamon or your favorite herbs!)
- *Optional: ½ teaspoon Cream of Tartar*
- *Optional: A few drops of food coloring*

- Old garlic press (as long as you don't want it back!)

Instructions:

1. Read the prompt with your child.
2. Prepare to make playdough! Since this activity can be messy, you may want to put down a tablecloth or garbage bag to cover any surfaces.
3. Work together to mix the dry ingredients (flour, salt, your spice/herb of choice-- if using a dry spice to add scent, and Cream of Tartar) in a medium-sized bowl.
4. In a separate small bowl, mix the wet ingredients (water, oil, food coloring, and scented extract of your choice--if using a liquid extract to add scent).
5. Slowly add the wet mixture to the dry mixture. Stir with a spoon until the dough starts to stick together.
6. Pat your hands with flour. Knead the dough until it's smooth and not sticky.
7. Other Tips and Tricks:
 - a. The dough should be firm and not sticky. If it feels wet, add a little more flour. If it feels dry, add a little more water.
 - b. Cream of tartar makes the dough more elastic and helps it last longer. If you don't have any, it's fine to leave out.
8. Wash your hands!
9. Give your child time to explore the playdough. Encourage them to use multiple senses to explore the playdough: how does it feel? How does it smell?
10. If your child needs some prompts to encourage their exploration, invite them to:
 - a. Change the texture of the playdough. It is naturally very smooth-- can they make it bumpy, shaggy, or rough? Can they make stripes or dots in the dough?
 - b. Create a self-portrait. Have your child look in the mirror. Notice the shape of their eyes, nose, mouth, hair, etc. Invite them to recreate their features with playdough. They can make all of the members of your household!

Resources:

Boston Children's Museum staff member Laura explains the playdough recipe in this video, made to celebrate Earth Day: [Earth Day Meets Messy Monday: Let's Make Playdough!](#)

Extensions:

If your child needs more challenges to go along with this activity:

- Make a second batch of playdough with a different scent and color. Invite your child to create something using both doughs.
- Invite your child to use small amounts of differently scented doughs together to invite some new smells. Which ones smell nice to them? Which one is not so nice?

- Give your child some extra herbs or other flavorings. Encourage them to add little bits to the dough and knead them in. How does the playdough change?
- Give your child lots of kitchen materials like bowls, cupcake pans, and small cake molds. Encourage them to set up a restaurant or bakery. Work together to name the restaurant and create a menu.

Together with your child, go to the “In the Human Body” topic on Flipgrid and share their playdough creations.