

Teachers + parents = lots more learning

- Research has shown that parental involvement boosts attainment by up to 3 months – this is the same as 25% more progress over a year!
- The earlier in a child's education parents get involved, the bigger the effect.
- One of the best ways to help your child is by supporting their learning at home by engaging them in fun activities, which will also help their development.
- This hand-out includes lots of activities for you to try at home with your children. They are designed to be cheap and easy to set up and many of them use things you will already have at home.
- Doing the activities together is really important so you can spend time and talk with your child.

Playdough

1lb plain flour
8oz salt
1 ½ pints water (including food colouring)
4 tablespoons oil
8 teaspoons cream of tartar



- Mix all the ingredients together in a large saucepan until smooth.
- Heat gently until it comes away from the sides and there are no wet patches.
- Cool a little, then knead until smooth.
- Store in an airtight container.
- Try adding different food colouring or even glitter.

Ideas:

- Promote pretend / role play using playdough – e.g. making food, using tea sets etc.
- Help **numeracy** by asking children to make you '3' of something from the dough or helping them form numbers from the dough
- Support **literacy** by helping them form letters from the dough, for example making the letters from their name
- Use cutters, shapes and rolling pins
- Make different colours

Also good for:

- Developing muscles in hand through kneading and forming shapes which will help your child with their **writing**

Tongs & Tweezers

You will need: tongs or big tweezers (try pound shops if you do not have any at home), small and large items (try breakfast cereal, stock cubes, noodles, lego bricks) to be moved around, boxes or trays with compartments

- Put different sized and shaped items out.
- Encourage children to use the tongs or tweezers to move them around, place them in compartments or pile them up.
- Ask your child to 'sort' items using the tongs or tweezers. For example, lego bricks into colours or pencils into sizes (longer, shorter)



Ideas:

- Try using play tea or food sets to encourage children to move things around – e.g. putting pasta from a saucepan into bowls
- Getting children to pile things on top of each other (e.g. stock cubes) using the tweezers or tongs)

Also good for:

- Developing fine motor skills, hand eye coordination and hand muscles which help with **writing**
- **Numeracy** – sorting items using categories using size or colour

Goop

You will need: 1 packet cornflour, 1 cup water, large container, food colouring if you wish, aprons, plastic or newspaper covered table

- Mix the water into the cornflour (and the colouring if using).
- The goop should have a thick consistency; add extra water if necessary.
- Put on aprons. Plunge hands into the goop and feel the consistency.
- Use words to describe the feeling: "sticky, slimy, cool" etc.
- Make patterns or letters in the goop on the table.



Slime

You will need: 1 cup lux soap flakes, 2 litres warm water, whisk / egg beaters, kitchen gadgets (such as a funnel, cup, whisk, soup ladle, scoop, soap drainers, sponges, jug, etc.) large plastic container

- Dissolve the soap flakes in the warm water inside the large plastic container.
- Allow to stand until the mixture becomes thick.
- Use the egg beaters or whisk to mix (children can help too).
- Use the kitchen gadgets to pour, measure, scoop, beat and whisk.
- Children can use words to describe how the mixture feels and what they are doing.



N.B. Dispose of soap mixture in the bin as it may clog the drain of a sink.

Other things to try:

- Squirt shaving foam or gel onto a plastic table cloth or into a container and allow children to feel the consistency and make patterns in the foam. Or try hiding objects for them to find.
- Putting some sand on a tray or in a box to draw letters and numbers in
- Sprinkling flour on a table for them to make marks in with their fingers or other objects

Ideas:

- If your child is reluctant to put their hands in the mixture, try giving them some plastic or latex gloves to allow them to get involved without getting messy
- Let children get involved in the pouring and measuring of the mixture
- Encourage them to use their fingers or the end of a paintbrush to copy lines or form letters or numbers (supports **literacy** and **numeracy**)

Sponge painting

You will need: Small thick sponges, shallow containers, clothes pegs, coloured paint, paper, scissors



- Cut sponges into various shapes.
- Cut two slots in the top of each one, attach a peg to each one to act as a handle.
- Put paint into shallow containers.

Fruit, Veg & Gadget Painting

You will need: Oranges, lemons, potatoes, carrots, onions, potato mashers, keys, buttons, lego blocks, keys, any flat objects, paint, shallow containers, paper, knife



- Cut vegetables and fruit in half to make flat surfaces.
- Pour paint into shallow containers.
- Press printing object into paint pad and then onto paper.

Soap painting

You will need: 1 cup soap flakes, mixing bowl, ½ cup cold water, whisk or electric mixer, containers, paint, large paintbrushes, heavy paper



- Put cold water in a bowl.
- Add soap flakes and beat until consistency of stiff egg whites.
- Add colour or use white mixture on coloured paper.
- This paint dries with a 3 dimensional effect, glitter will stick to it – no glue needed.
- **N.B. Dispose of soap mixture in the bin as it may clog the drain of a sink.**

Balloon painting

You will need: partly inflated balloons, paint, paper, apron



Ideas:

- Encourage counting – 'can you print me 3 oranges?' (**numeracy**)
- Cut out different shapes from the sponges to promote shape recognition (**numeracy**)
- Ask your child to tell you about their printing or choose a favourite story to print – e.g. The Hungry Caterpillar or Goldilocks and the Three Bears (**literacy**)
- Try running cars or trucks through the paint to make track marks on the paper or using any plastic toys or objects which spark your child's interest in order to get them engaged in the activity.

Shakers & sounds

You will need: lots of different containers with lids (try plastic bottles, Tupperware containers, balloons etc.), different dried foods to fill shakers (try rice, seeds, lentils, sugar etc.)



- Partly fill containers with different dried foods.
- Tightly screw on the lids.
- Try shaking, rolling to make different sounds.
- Encourage children to describe the sounds ("quiet, loud, what does it sound like?").



Ideas:

- Get children involved in making the shakers
- Encourage turn talking with your child – 'my turn', 'now it's your turn'
- Sound out a simple beat with a shaker and ask your child to try to copy it