

The
Early Years Count
Literacy
Connection



Play with Clay!

Written by Jenny Pinkerton

Preschool edition

Overview of Book

What in the world can you make with a blob of clay? Just about anything! All it takes is some imagination and some simple techniques like forming and rolling and coiling and smushing. Lots of colorful photos and descriptive text offer easy ideas for children to try out.

Genre: Picture, Non-fiction

Vocabulary

Books are a rich source of words new to children. Here are some words from *Play with Clay!* to introduce in your classroom:

| | |
|--------|---------|
| coiled | smushed |
| formed | blob |
| rolled | mixed |

Each time you read the book, choose 2 or 3 words to highlight.

Use age-appropriate definitions and/or the illustrations to help children gain an understanding of each word's meaning.

Use these new words throughout the day, reminding the children, "That's a word from our story!"

Connecting with the HighScope Curriculum

COR Advantage 1.5

Approaches to Learning

Item B

(Problem solving with materials)

Item C *(Reflection)*

Mathematics

Item T *(Geometry and special awareness)*

Creative Arts

Item X *(Art)*

Science & Technology

Item EE

(Tools and technology)

Reading Tips

This can be read anytime, but certainly read this to your class as a preview of Small Group Time. "This book will give you all a clue about Small Group today!" After each page ask, "Has anyone (formed, smushed, mixed, rolled, coiled) clay?" Allow time for children to share. Explain how we can use our hands to create, take apart or examine all sorts of things. Share the excitement in your tone of voice as you turn each page to see what is next.

Three readings are recommended to familiarize children with the story. Each reading provides an opportunity to introduce new vocabulary words, pose open-ended questions, and engage children in activities that make the story "come alive."

At the end of each reading, display the book in the book or art area so children can read it on their own.

Throughout the Routine

Refer to the book throughout the day and use new vocabulary words in meaningful ways. Active engagement with the story helps the content come alive.

Use terms from the book for **Transitions**. Ask children to move as if they are *coiled* or *smushed*.

Have a *blob* of red, yellow and blue play clay for each child at **Small Group Time**. Encourage exploration including mixing the colors together.

Supply play clay at the sign-in part of **Arrival**. Encourage children to make the clay letters that are in their names.

Around the Room

Highlight the book's content and build on the children's excitement in a variety of locations.

Add new and novel items to the **Art Area** along with fresh batches of clay and play dough to encourage children to use their imaginations as they work with clay. Some examples of things you might include: nails and screws, q-tips, rubber bands, paper clips, butter knives, forks, or chopsticks.

Post photos in or near the **Art Area** of a variety and range of sculptures from around the world and from different times to show the range of possibilities.

Open-ended Questions

Enhance active engagement and early critical thinking skills by asking open-ended questions. These questions encourage children to explain why or how things happen, make predictions, or brainstorm possibilities rather than give one "right" answer.

Here are some questions you might ask for *Play with Clay!*:

Where do you think clay comes from?

How does it get to be different colors?

How do you use clay? Can you show or describe it?

*For more information on how to use books and stories with children to enhance your curriculum, contact **The Family Connection:***

website—
www.famconn.org

Facebook—
@famconnsjc

phone—
574-237-9740

@ Home

Since many of the children in our county will have this book at home, use it as a way to further the home-school connection. In your daily contact—in person or by text, email or other notes home—encourage families to share *Play with Clay!* with their child. Here's a sample message you can send:

Enjoy playing with play-dough with your child as you look through *Play with Clay!* together. Ask your child to show you how to do the different types of forms. "Show me how to *smush*." After your child shows, do the same. Use the terms in the book to help describe your actions (*coiled, formed...*). Encourage your child to describe what and how they used the play dough or clay.

Have fun making play dough at home with your child. Try this "best and easiest" uncooked play dough recipe. In a large bowl, mix together: 4 cups flour, 1 cup iodized salt, and 1¼ cups warm water. Knead the dough for 10 minutes. Keep in an airtight container.