



Talking about the Math around Us

Handy Homemade Play Dough

You can help children learn math skills while having fun making play dough! As you help children follow the recipe, they learn about measurement and capacity.

Try this activity at home, in child care centers, or during library story times. For easier-to-clean-up alternatives, see Play Ideas for More Math Learning below.

Math: Measurement (capacity)

Talk Math!

Everyday math words are in *italics*.

Avoid questions with a right answer. Instead, ask children to explain their ideas.

What You Need

Materials per child

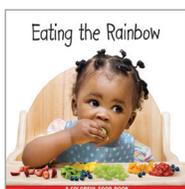
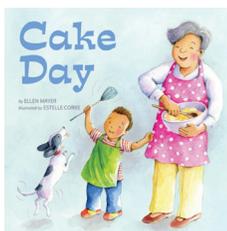
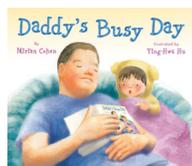
Leave ingredients in bulk so children can help measure.

- 1 cup white flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- A few drops of food coloring
- A plastic bag or container to store play dough

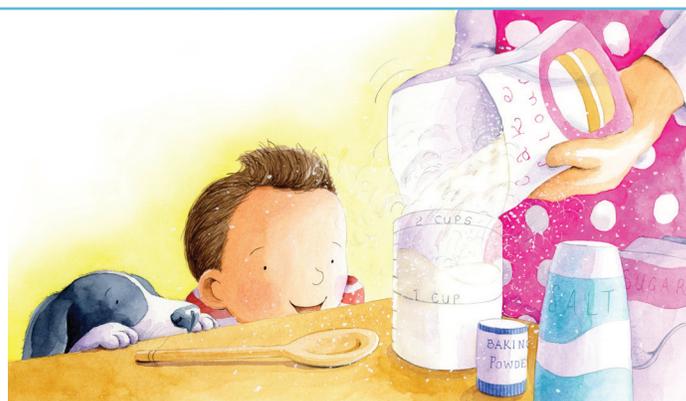
Materials to Share

- Mixing bowl
- 2 2-cup measuring cups
- Measuring spoons: 1 tablespoon
- Mixing spoon

Pair this activity with these Star Bright Books titles to begin talking about the math around you!



www.starbrightbooks.com



Directions

Help children make the recipe or allow them to measure ingredients on their own.

As children help measure, talk about the process:

"Watch me pour. Tell me when I reach *one cup*."

"How do you know if I've poured *more than 1/4 cup* of water?"

"How do you know which measuring cup has *less* in it?"

1. Measure out 1 cup flour and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup salt in one measuring cup
2. Measure out $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water, 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, and food coloring in the second measuring cup
3. Pour the flour mixture into the bowl
4. Pour the water mixture into the bowl
5. Mix well until smooth
6. Store play dough in the plastic bag or container

Suggestion: Make batches of play dough in different colors.

Play Ideas for More Math Learning

PLAN A PLAY DOUGH PARTY!

Use homemade or store-bought play dough for one or more of these activities:

Cake in a Box. Make a round cake that fits inside a little "cake box" (tea bag or small candy box)

Play Dough Sandwich. Try to make two pieces of play dough "bread" the same size and thickness. Then fill your sandwich with play dough of a different color.

Fill It Up. Fill a clear, plastic cup with play dough "juice." Extra challenge: Try to fill the cup half-way full.

Great Gift. Make a play dough present that will fit inside a small box.