

These are a few of my favorite inexpensive things.....PLAYDOUGH and speech, language, and auditory activities supporting oral language development!

Using playdough as a tool to develop a child's early ability to identify durational differences between a long, sustained message such as "roll" and "bam, bam, bam" a short discrete message. The child takes a plastic rolling pin and rolls out the dough when he hears "roll" and takes a playdough mallet and hammers the dough after hearing "bam" "bam" "bam."

Using playdough as a tool to develop a child's ability to detect differences between monosyllabic and multisyllabic words using a set of seasonal cookie cutters, a cookie sheet, and a spatula. The child listens to the word heard and scoops the playdough cut out cookie off the cookie sheet and transfers the cookie to a plate. The child can then sort the cut out cookies onto smaller plates and expressively name each cookie transferred to a smaller plate for cooling the cookies!

Using playdough as a tool to develop a child's ability to follow auditory directives such as "give the gingerbread boy a pair of eyes," "give the gingerbread girl three red hot buttons," "put the gingerbread boy on the fox's nose," "put all of the small gingerbread girls on the smallest red plate," "give Ms. Mary all but one of the small gingerbread boy cookies!"

Using playdough as a tool to develop a child's auditory sequential memory. Using three colors of dough and several different sizes of ice cream scoops, stack scoops of playdough ice cream to complete an auditory sequential directive such as,

"put a white scoop of playdough on the ice cream cone first, then a scoop of red dough, and last a small scoop of chocolate scented playdough." Scent the dough with commercial flavorings for a sensory experience!

Using playdough as a tool to build basic concepts, make a snowman out of white playdough and make a winter scene using a small plastic evergreen, a park bench, a sleigh, a tin foil frozen winter pond, and a small wrapped jewelry box, let the child move the snowman around the winter scene demonstrating an understanding of spatial concepts, such as "put the snowman on top of the frozen pond," "place the snowman next to the evergreen," "put the snowman between the evergreen and the park bench," "make the snowman slide across the pond," or "put the present beneath the snowman."

Using playdough snakes to create basic shapes, and then manipulate cut out thematic objects of various sizes such as "ice cream cones" and follow these auditory directives "place a small ice cream cone inside a heart," "place three large ice cream cones inside the rectangle," "put all of the small ice cream cones inside the circle."

Using playdough as a barrier for small objects.....hide small manipulative object, such as different types of dinosaurs, inside clumps of dough. Let a preschooler open a Ziplock bag and take out a clump of dough while pretending to be an archeologist. Encourage the child to search and find "What's inside?" the clump of dough. Using small muscles to find the hidden object will help build strength and dexterity. Have the child sort dinosaurs found. Build oral expressive skills while naming each dinosaur found.

Using playdough with the "Learning to Listen" sounds. Collect a set of cookie cutters and make several laminated scene mats. Cut out animals or objects to build sound associations. Place the cut out cookie on the laminated mat. When the child hears the sound, playdough cut outs can be placed on the mat or taken off of the mat.

Using playdough to build early quantitative concepts. Cut out sets of like objects such as pumpkins in the fall. Encourage a preschooler to "count out a numeric quantity of pumpkins" and place them on a fall plate.

Using playdough to build early mathematical concepts such as "each." Encourage a child to cut out a set of apples using an apple cookie cutter. Match the number of cut out apples to the number of children in the room. Use Fisher Price people and give each of the small figures an apple!

Using playdough to build early mathematical concepts such as "all." Encourage a child to cut out a set of fall leaves using a leaf shaped cookie cutter. Given a small plastic rake purchased at a discount store, encourage a child to "rake up all of the cut out leaves."

Using playdough to build early mathematical concepts such as "some." During a unit on "The Little Red Hen" use playdough and a real oven bread pan to bake some bread. Make a "loaf of bread" using playdough with preschoolers. Bake it in the dramatic play center oven. Emphasizing, "We are baking some bread. Soon, our bread will be hot. We will take it out of the oven and give some bread to everybody. Everybody come and

get some bread. Here's some bread for you. Here's some bread for you!" Enjoy the bread you've baked together.

Using playdough to build early qualitative concepts, such as "heavy" and "light." Using a primary balance scale, place 2 or 3 small cut outs of an item using a cookie cutter related to a thematic unit such as a small ghost. Place a larger quantity of ghosts on the opposite side of the scale. Encourage young children to observe what's happened. Which side of the scale is heavier? What happens when you add more ghosts to the scale? Why? Practice making early verbal justifications for their observations.

Use playdough as a teacher tool in this way.....clumps of dough can hold laminated picture cards for minimal pair work. Children love sticking their word cards into dough building a garden of learning. Purchase a small watering can at a craft store or a garden center. Let the child water the word heard in the "garden of learning."

Use playdough as a teacher tool in this way.....add clumps of dough underneath picture cards made using a favorite clip art or commercial source of pictures of bugs from the Eric Carle stories, a spider, a cricket, a bee, a ladybug. Let children swat the bugs that they've heard you name. Make this more difficult by calling out two bugs. Swat the bugs in the order heard using a fly swatter. Dip the fly swatter in bubble soap to make a unique type of bubbles!

Using playdough as a tool for building phonemic awareness by playing "Rhyme Time" with precut letters. Cut out the letters for a word such as "hat" and have an extra set of letters pre

cut, /b/, /s/, /c/, /r/, /m/. Change the first letter of the word say the sound and make a new rhyming word.

Using playdough as tool for building phonemic awareness, older preschoolers will love this song. Using the "Theme from Batman" Cut out the following set of playdough letters: /r/, /s/, /c/, and /f/. Sing "Bih, bih, bih, bih, bih, bih, bih, bih, bih, bih, batman." Change the first playdough letter from /b/ to /r/ and then sing, "Rih, rih, rih, rih, rih, rih, rih, rih, rih, ratman." Continue swapping letters and have some seasonal fun in the fall!

Using playdough snakes, practice pitch changes on a sustained vowel, using a wavy snake!

Using playdough snakes, practice vowel alternations on an ascending/descending set of stairs created with a very long playdough snake! Use a zig zag snake, and alternate CV combinations.

Using a circular cookie cutter, cut out a set of circles. Make happy faces on half of the circles and sad faces on the other circles. Using a CD player and different types of music, listen to the music and choose the face that represents how the child feels when he/she hears music. Build comprehension that different types of music provoke different types of feelings in people.

Using green craft foam, cut out foam shaped lily pads. Hot glue silk flowers to the lily pads. Create playdough tadpoles. Add a given number of tadpoles to each lily pad. Save the lily pads to float in the water table!

Which one has more?? Let your preschoolers have fun with this game. Add a quantity of playdough to a Ziplock bag. Add a second, different quantity of dough to another Ziplock bag. Place each Ziplock bag inside another bag a brown lunch bag and a white lunch bag. Draw a question mark on the front of each bag. Pass the bags and let the children use weight as a way to determine which bag contains more. Graph their guesses and then open up the bags! This can be used at a theme-based party. Get seasonally appropriate bags to pass while the children are seated in a circle.

Build comprehension of basic qualitative concepts, "pretty" and "ugly" in this way! After reading Felicia Bond's The Day it Rained Hearts, cut out a set of 10 small hearts from playdough. Let the children pound away and smash half of the hearts with playdough mallets, commenting "Oh no, the hearts won't be pretty anymore. These hearts are UGLY!" Place the pretty hearts, those that are still intact on doilies, and the ugly hearts on newsprint. Sort pretty and ugly hearts using a t-chart with your preschoolers!

Build comprehension of basic qualitative concepts "fat" and "thin" in this way! Using a Halloween cat shaped cookie cutter make a "fat" cat. Stretch out the "fat" cat until he becomes "thin." Sort fat and thin cut out cats!

Build comprehension of basic qualitative concepts "big" and "little" in this way. Create a large playdough snowman using a bakery sized cookie cutter; make a second little snowman using a small cookie cutter. Sort big and little snowmen into two groups.

Add silver glitter to white playdough and make a set of snowflakes using seasonal cookie cutters. Count the points on each snowflake. Guide the thought process of the children as they make the generalization that all snowflakes have six points. Read the book Snowflakes available in a downloadable minibook format with the children.

Winter fun begins with penguins. Follow these directives to create your own penguin crafted from playdough. Using an oval shaped cookie cutter, cut out two large ovals and one small oval. Using the largest oval for a body, cut one oval in half to make wings, add a smaller oval for a head. Using a small diamond shaped piece of orange construction paper, fold it in half to make a beak.

Using playdough and a collection of animal cookie cutters, precut a collection of playdough animals to sort by features, those with hair and those with feathers. Make this more difficult for an older group of preschoolers by giving the children a verbal description of an animal such as, "It has four legs. Its body is covered with hair. It can bark loudly." Let the children problem solve and then sort by features!

Using playdough to help reinforce expressive use of a targeted linguistic skill, such as "That's **for** _____." Set a table with a set of plastic small children's plates. Cut out a set of cookies using a favorite cookie cutter. Using a child's small spatula, scoop a cookie off a piece of cardboard covered with foil to make it look just like a cookie sheet, and then serve each guest a cookie saying, "That's **for** mommy." "That's **for** daddy." "That's **for** me." "That's **for** you!"

Use playdough for a cooperative learning activity in this way. Pass out a clump of dough to each of your preschoolers. Encourage the children to make a snowball by rolling the dough. Stack the snowballs in order of size to create a class snowman. Ask "Who has the biggest snowball?" "We'll put the biggest snowball on the bottom." "Who has the biggest snowball?" Continue stacking until the smallest snowball is left. This is a great opportunity for reinforcing the comparative **-est**.

Link playdough to singing! Teach your preschoolers this simple song. "Roll the ball, Roll the ball, 1,2,3. Roll the ball, Roll the ball, Roll the ball to me." Roll out a big ball made from playdough. As the children sing the song with you take turns rolling the ball of playdough across a tabletop to each of the preschoolers. They'll be delighted watching the playdough ball wobble across the tabletop.

Use a set of playdough snakes when teaching the comparative **is longer than** . Use two different colors of playdough and make a snake one length one color. Use a second color of dough and make a second shorter snake. Lay the snakes next to each other. Using UNIFIX cubes, measure the length of each snake. Note and comment on the length of the longer snake with your preschoolers. Mention that "The red snake is longer than the blue snake." Encourage your preschoolers to make playdough snakes and then compare in pairs. Determine which snake is longer. Make verbal statements about the lengths of two snakes.

Using a very long playdough snake, coil it as if making a clay pot. Close off the top and you've made a bee hive. Motivate a young learner by sticking small bees on toothpicks into the hive as if the bees are returning to the bee hive. Bees can be earned during an activity. Link to literature, Eric Carle's The Honeybee and the Robber.

Use a set of manipulative dinosaurs to make a set of playdough fossils! Roll out some dough. Press the dinosaur into the dough letting it make an imprint. Encourage young children to match dinosaurs to their "fossils" in the dough! Name the dinosaurs found on your archeological dig! Let the children make their own fossils. Cooperative learning link: Play the game "Go Extinct" with your preschoolers.

Using a set of manipulative plastic animals, set up this exploration activity in your preschool science center, "Who's been here?" Make tracks across playdough with the feet of animals such as a duck, a dog, a rabbit, and a hen. Let the children use small hand held magnifiers to try to decide, "Who's been here?" Make it more challenging for little learners by removing the plastic animals from the center. Add a set of animal photographs in a butterfly net for the children to remove and review as they try to determine what animal might have made the footprint that they are studying!

Use playdough and link to literature after reading McDuff Moves In by Rosemary Wells, cut out a Westie from playdough

just like the main character in the children's book. Have the children follow two step auditory sequential directives such as "first McDuff follows the garbage truck, then he goes into the garden." Using laminated cards showing different locations that McDuff travels, make the playdough McDuff character roam from location to location just like he did in the story.

Use playdough and link to literature after reading Eric Carle's The Very Hungry Caterpillar, cut out a set of foods using cookie cutters that the caterpillar did eat in the story and a couple of foods that the caterpillar did not eat from the story. Use this as an auditory recall activity!

Build oral motor abilities with this quick playdough activity. Open a container and roll out a snake. Let your preschool child snip with Crayola scissors for small fingers short lengths or cut with a plastic knife short lengths of dough. Point to each piece of dough as you create strings of nonsense syllables. See how many your preschoolers can say on one breath.

Expand preschool basic spatial concepts with this playdough activity to reinforce "near" and "far." Given a small and a large cookie cutter of a like object, cut out two objects. Place the large playdough cut out nearest to the child. Place the smaller playdough cut out farther from the child. Ask the child to find the one that is **near** and to find the cut out that is **far**.

Expand preschool basic spatial concepts with this playdough activity to reinforce "above" and "below." Using a marker draw

a two story house. Cut out using a Christmas cookie cutter, Santa. Place Santa in his sleigh **above** the house. Place Santa in his sleigh **below** the house.

Enjoy this playdough activity as you build vocabulary with your preschoolers noting different features of dinosaurs. Give the children laminated black and white outlines of favorite dinosaurs, a brontosaurus, an aptosaurus, a t-rex, a triceratops, and a stegosaurus. Give the children three balls of playdough, two small balls of dough and one large ball of dough. Have the children make the dinosaurs and add **plates** to the back of the stegosaurus, add **three horns** to the triceratops. Make sure to comment on the features that distinguish dinosaurs.

During a unit on dinosaurs work cooperatively as a group during preschool time and build a volcano using dough. Make sure that you leave an opening. Children love to pile the dough together, making it really high and large just like a volcano from long ago. Add a small shell or child's measuring cup used to administer medicine. Add a teaspoon of baking soda, a couple of drops of red/yellow food coloring, and vinegar to make the volcano erupt. Suggestion: Let the playdough dry overnight! Use manipulative dinosaurs to show what happened to the dinosaurs long ago. Let the children problem solve as the hot lava starts to flow!

Bring out the playdough for this indoor table top activity! Using dinosaur cookie cutters available at a favorite craft store, roll out a stegosaurus and a brontosaurus. Encourage

older preschoolers to listen to a verbal description of the dinosaur described using target thematic vocabulary such as the dinosaur with a spiked tail and plates on his back and let the preschooler scoop up the dinosaur described with a kitchen spatula. Place dinosaurs in a swamp like scene created on a cookie sheet including a waterfall, a volcano, and ferns from paper cut outs.

Add precut confetti from a local party store to make the ultimate playdough sensory experience. Metallic colored confetti works well for this activity. Add flags for Memorial Day weekend. Use this for a pragmatic language activity and converse about activities that a family might participate in during over a holiday weekend. Practice taking conversational turns with your preschooler!

Read aloud Harold and the Purple Crayon; Dinosaur Days with your preschooler. Make a batch of purple playdough with the children. Cut out a purple brontosaurus, a triceratops, and a pterodactyl just like the dinosaurs in the story. Practice responding to wh-questions as you ask the children to identify the dinosaur associated with changes in the story plot. Use the cut outs and a paper stick puppet of Harold to retell the story.

Early story problems can be solved with playdough cut out animals. Give the children a set of cut out dinosaurs. Create a story problem for them to help solve. "Long ago there were three long necks eating leaves off trees. One became thirsty. He walked away. Then there were _____long

necks eating leaves off a tree. (Make a paper tree and leaves for the dinos to eat and make one walk away to dramatize the problem for littlest learners!)

Cut out a set of playdough circles using a circular cookie cutter. Using chocolate chips or M & M mini's follow these auditory directives: "Put two chocolate chips and one red M & M on a cookie." "Put three chocolate chips and two blue M & M's on a cookie." Make a set of decorated cookies. Use early mathematical concepts of quantity in these auditory only directives!

After reading A Rainbow of My Own by mix up five batches of dough. Encourage the children to work cooperatively at a center to complete this activity. Provide a model of a rainbow made from dough. HINT: Take a picture with a digital camera and add to your math/manipulative cooperative learning center. Encourage the children to roll out snakes and align them to form a rainbow. Have on hand tools, such as dull, plastic knives for the preschoolers.

Encourage phonemic awareness with this center activity for young preschoolers. Read aloud Chicka Chicka Boom Boom. Using a set of letter cookie cutters, encourage the children to cut out letters of the alphabet. Work cooperatively to repeat the lines from the book and put the letters in order!

Using a piece of construction paper, draw with a black permanent marker a set of polygons, including a large rectangle, a circle, an oval, a diamond, a square, and a triangle. Make long playdough snakes and have your preschooler lay the snake on top of the shape. This builds early mathematical concepts. Make it more difficult by using the shape as the key word in a sentence, such as "Put the snake on top of the rectangle. Make it more difficult by giving a verbal description, "This shape has four sides that are the same." "This shape has three sides."

A Few of Our Favorite INEXPENSIVE Things.....MASKING TAPE and speech, language and auditory activities that support oral language development!

Create the ultimate barrier for little hands.....a NO GRAB ZONE made from MASKING TAPE. Tape a rectangle in front of the child directly on the table top. Place objects outside of the rectangle on a small flannel board that are being used for instructional purposes so that the child learns to listen and wait for critical information before manipulating an object. HINT: Make a small flannel board using a poster frame. Cover the frame with flannel and using a staple gun, staple to the back side.

Make a table top t-chart for sorting activities by using MASKING TAPE to tape the "T" to the table top. Sort into two columns by feature, i.e. animals with fur vs. animals with feathers, long ago, now, or things that will open a coconut, things that will not open a coconut! All done....let little fingers help pull off the tape and throw it away!

Build oral motor strength. Cut out equal pieces of MASKING TAPE and place across the therapy table. As the teacher or SLP points to a piece of tape, child repeats the nonsense syllable. Increase the number of pieces of tape and increase oral repetitions. Increase the length of the tape and increase duration!

Mark where little feet need to be when teaching a new group game using MASKING TAPE! Children benefit from the visual

cue, that this is where I stand as I listen and learn a new game.

Mark the spot on the floor where we line up with a short piece of MASKING TAPE in front of little feet. Children learn to line up quickly in order on the spot on the floor. This helps teach proper space and early consideration of others too.

Give older preschoolers five craft sticks and ask them to create two triangles! See if they create two triangles that are adjacent and share a common side. Make it easier by using MASKING TAPE to tape triangles to the table for the children to use as a pattern.

Teach the children shape by adding MASKING TAPE to the table top creating a large triangle, "A triangle has three sides. A triangle has three sides. Up the side. Down the side around the side. Oh, the triangle has three sides. Let children use their fingers to trace the path of the triangle as you sing the song!

Teach this shape song..... "A square is like a box. A square is like a box. It has four sides. They are the same. A square is like a box." Take a shoe box and get your tape ready!!! Build four equal UNIFIX lengths of cubes representing the four equal sides of a square. Lay masking tape on the edges/four sides of the box the same length as the equivalent sets of cubes. Cut off the excess cardboard so the shoebox becomes a square box. Take the cut off end and use MASKING TAPE

to tape it to the cut end to make a shorter, square box. Leave the box in an area of the classroom with sets of UNIFIX cubes for the children to explore and review throughout the year!

Use MASKING TAPE on a table top to create a barrier between two children. We use masking tape barriers to define work zones for our youngest learners. When singing a song with verses and manipulative cut outs, children enjoy knowing where they can keep their own set of cut outs.

Use MASKING TAPE to tape a zig zag or a straight path for walking during an obstacle course set up to match a theme. Make a zig zag path to walk around ice bergs during a unit on polar animals! Make a straight path to follow during a unit on the gingerbread man as the children stoop to grab a cut out cookie from the river saving the gingerbread men as they walk across a pretend bridge!

Use MASKING TAPE for rehearsing auditory sequential memory skills. After listening to Marc Brown's Brown Bear, Brown Bear What do you See? tape three pieces of masking tape to the table top from left to right. Given a set of cut outs from the story, a red bird, a blue horse, a white sheep, an orange fish, a teacher, a yellow duck and a green frog, ask the children to listen and recall the order of the animals named, "a yellow duck, a green frog and then a teacher." Place the pictures each on a piece of tape in the order heard.

