

The Greatest Play Recipes Ever For You
And Your Children
(And What To Do With Them)

By

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Contents

Introduction	3
How To Use This Book	4
Chapter 1 – Play dough	5
Chapter 2 – Corn flour goop	9
Chapter 3 – Sugar Biscuits	12
Chapter 4 – Sweet Treats	15
About The Author	19

Introduction

Over many years as a Parent, Teacher, Sure Start Project Worker and Writer, I have used recipes for things to play with and things to eat as part of my work in encouraging adults and children to play and learn together. I began to realise that there are some recipes that I just keep going back to again and again because they are

- Easy to do
- Almost foolproof
- Can be used in lots of different ways

In this little book, I want to share those recipes and some of the ways you can use them with your children.

DON'T PANIC

1. None of these recipes call for any great cooking ability, like I said, they are pretty foolproof.
2. I'm going to talk about English, Maths and Science! You might think you were hopeless at these subjects at school and won't be able to help a child learn any skills from these subjects, but you'll be surprised at what you know.
3. If you're not that confident, make some of the recipes and experiment and play with them on your own before you use them with kids. Kids have this way of knowing if you're not confident or enthusiastic about something and they'll pick up that vibe from you and won't be bothered either. Build your own confidence and enthusiasm on your own time, and if you find there's anything you really don't enjoy, don't do it (this goes for all play!)
4. HAVE FUN! Enjoy the experience either as revisiting something you did when you were young, or as something completely new.

How To Use This Book

Each chapter starts with a recipe, what you need and how to make the finished product. After that, there are some ideas of what you can do and the skills you can develop by making and using the recipe together.

When you think of your own ideas (as you will, because you know what you and your children really enjoy), use the Notes page at the chapter to record your own ideas.

Chapter 1

Play dough

To make really good play dough you need really CHEAP ingredients. I've been making this recipe for about 20 years and nobody I know can tell me why the cheaper the flour and oil you use the better the dough works!

There is nothing too terrible in this basic recipe if any of it gets eaten, but I wouldn't encourage it!

To make play dough you will need:

1 cup flour
½ cup salt
2 teaspoon cream of tartar
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 cup water
few drops of food colouring (optional)

Method

- Put the flour, salt and cream of tartar into a pan (non-stick if you have it, but it doesn't really matter)
- Add the oil, water and a few drops of food colouring and stir well
- Place the pan on the hob over a medium heat and stir constantly until the mixture forms a ball in the middle of the pan
- Turn out onto a floured surface and knead well (at this point you can add some glitter if you like)
- Leave to cool before you play with it.
- Store in an airtight box or bag in the fridge and it will keep for several weeks.

Ideas

Making the dough

Make it together, you can do the cooking bit, but children can do the adding and mixing.

Language

- Talk about what the different ingredients feel like

Maths

- Talk about bigger/smaller, more/less amounts of the different ingredients

Science

- What will happen when you add wet ingredients (like water and oil), to dry ingredients (like flour and salt)?
(Science/Problem Solving)
- What will happen when you cook or cool the mixture? How will it change

Using the dough

Roll balls in your hands.

Make snakes by rolling on the table.

Coil the snakes into pots.

Use the snakes to make numbers and letter shapes and talk about them.

Make pretend food

Roll it out with a rolling pin or empty bottle and cut out shapes using biscuit cutters or cups.

Press objects into the dough to make patterns

Make a big ball and a little ball. Now try to make a bigger one, a smaller one, one that could fit in the middle

Make lots of balls. How many are there? Add one more, how many are there now? Take one away, what about now?

NOTES

What was fun? What wasn't so much fun? What else could you add to the dough? How did you use it?

Chapter 2

Corn flour Goop

Corn flour Goop is just fun. It has a strange texture, as it feels quite hard when it's on the tray, but will drip through your fingers when you pick it up. It's really good for drawing shapes and writing in and the resistance in the mixture helps to build good finger muscles which will help with things like holding pencils, paintbrushes and scissors.

To make corn flour goop you will need:

A plastic tray

Corn flour

Water

Method

- Put a large pile of corn flour on the tray
- Add water and mix to a thick, silky paste

If the goop starts to dry out, just add a bit more water. This can be kept for a couple of days before washing the tray and making fresh.

Ideas

Making the goop

Language

- Talk about what the different ingredients feel like

Maths

- Talk about bigger/smaller, more/less amounts of the different ingredients

Science

- What will happen when you add wet ingredients (like water and oil), to dry ingredients (like flour and salt)?
(Science/Problem Solving)

Using the goop

Draw shapes, pictures, letters and numbers in the goop.

For a mobile version of this, pour a few spoons of goop into a plastic pocket (a poly pocket) and then securely tape up all the sides. You can add glitter or food colouring before you tape it up to add to the fun!

NOTES

What was fun? What wasn't so much fun? What else could you add to the goop? How did you use it?

Chapter 3

Sugar Biscuits

Yes, this is the best biscuit recipe I know, it's cheap, simple and can be cut and decorated in lots of different ways for different celebrations and occasions.

To make sugar biscuits you will need:

100g of self-raising flour
50g of caster sugar
50g butter
1 egg (beaten)
Juice and rind of ½ a lemon

Method

- Pre-heat the oven to 350F, 180C, gas mark 4
- Sift the flour and sugar together into a bowl
- Rub in the butter until the mixture looks like fine breadcrumbs
- Add the egg and the lemon and mix to a stiff paste
- Roll out the dough thinly and press out the biscuits using cutters
- Put on a greased baking tray and cook for 15 minutes
- Cool on a wire rack
- Decorate and enjoy together

Ideas

Making the biscuits

Make them together, you can do the cooking bit, but children can do the adding and mixing.

Language

- Talk about what the different ingredients feel like

Maths

- Talk about bigger/smaller, more/less amounts of the different ingredients

Science

- What will happen when you add wet ingredients (like water and oil), to dry ingredients (like flour and salt)?
(Science/Problem Solving)
- What will happen when you cook or cool the mixture? How will it change

Using the biscuits

Biscuit cutters in different shapes can be brought cheaply in supermarkets and shops, but you can always use a clean cup. Cut out biscuits and once they're cooked and cool use icing and sweets and dried fruit to decorate them.

To give as gifts, put in clear cellophane bags tied with ribbon or visit www.dltk-bible.com/crafts/mbasketweave.htm for instructions on how to make a pretty woven basket.

If you want to hang the biscuits on a Christmas tree, simply make a hole near the top of each one before you cook them and then tie some thin ribbon through when they are cold.

NOTES

What was fun? What wasn't so much fun? What else could you add to the biscuits? How did you use it?

Chapter 4

Sweet Treats

These are my two favourite sweet recipes. Neither need any cooking and make good gifts for any occasion. They are Coconut Ice and Peppermint Creams... enjoy!

To make coconut ice you will need:

340g desiccated coconut

340g icing sugar

400g tin condensed milk

red food colouring

Method

- Mix together the condensed milk and sugar
- Add a few drops of red food colouring and mix well
- Add the coconut and mix until everything is well-combined
- Roll out flat and leave to set overnight in the fridge
- Use a small cutter to press out sweets
- Leave on grease proof paper to dry out in the fridge again
- Put into the woven baskets

To make Peppermint Creams you will need:

1 teaspoon peppermint essence

1 egg white

225g icing sugar

225g chocolate

Method

- Whisk egg white until it trebles in volume
- Gradually fold in the sugar and peppermint essence and work to a stiff paste
- Dust a work surface with icing sugar and roll out the paste until it is about 5mm thick
- Use sweet cutters to press out shapes and place them on grease proof paper, leave overnight
- Melt the chocolate
- Dip each sweet into the chocolate and leave on a wire rack to set

Ideas

Making the sweets

Make them together.

Language

- Talk about what the different ingredients feel like

Maths

- Talk about bigger/smaller, more/less amounts of the different ingredients

Science

- What will happen when you add wet ingredients (like water and oil), to dry ingredients (like flour and salt)?
(Science/Problem Solving)
- What will happen when you cook or cool the mixture? How will it change

Using the sweets

sweet cutters in different shapes can be brought cheaply in supermarkets and shops, but you can always use an apple corer or clean bottle top.

To give as gifts, put in clear cellophane bags tied with ribbon or visit www.dltk-bible.com/crafts/mbasketweave.htm for instructions on how to make a pretty woven basket.

NOTES

What was fun? What wasn't so much fun? What else could you add to the sweets? How did you use it?

About The Author

Sarah Cruickshank is a qualified teacher, with a BA in Education, Theological and Religious Studies from the University of Surrey and a Certificate in Early Years Practice from The Open University. Having spent time as a teacher, running lots of Sure Start groups, in housing, arts administration and retail, now works as a full-time writer and author.

She is particularly interested in play and helping adults and children play and learn together.

She writes extensively on childcare and education for a number of print and online publications.

Sarah lives in North West England where she enjoys walking, cycling and chilling by the sea. She is married with one son.