

Homemade Play Dough

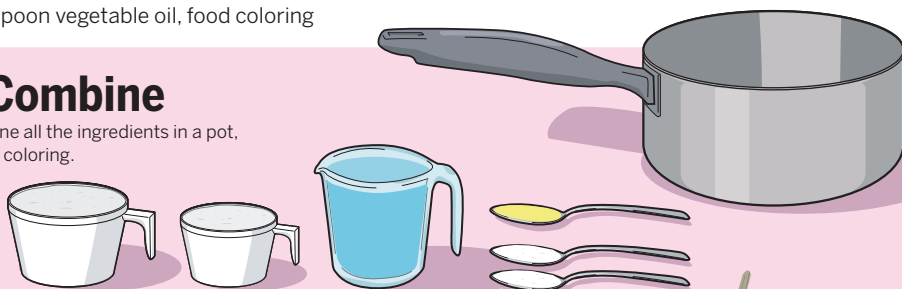
Recently, I had fun spending a day with my 2-year-old niece, Lola. At first, a day with a toddler seemed daunting. I tried to remember what I did with my children when they were that age. It started to come back pretty quickly, the need to occupy their young hands and minds with tactile things. Then I remembered my old recipe for play dough that I used to make with my own children. I found it in the metal recipe box between paper maché and zucchini bread. You may already have all the ingredients, as they are commonplace.



You will need: 1 cup flour, ½ cup salt, 2 tablespoons cream of tartar, 1 cup water, 1 tablespoon vegetable oil, food coloring

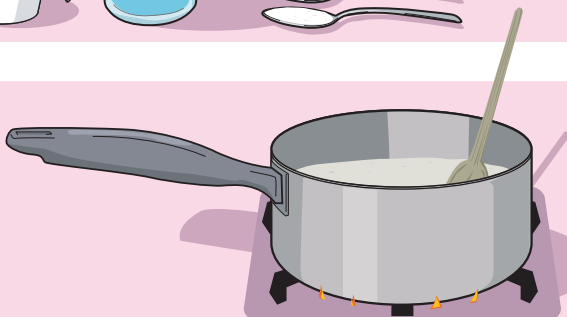
1. Combine

Combine all the ingredients in a pot, except coloring.



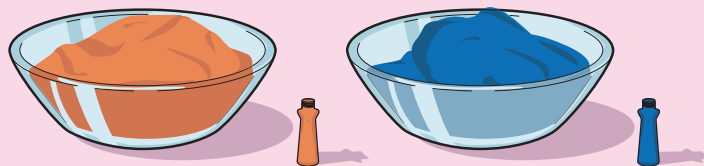
2. Cook

Cook over low to medium heat for approximately 10 minutes, or until smooth. Stir while cooking.



3. Color

Add a few drops of food coloring after everything is mixed together well.



NOTE: To keep the play dough fresh after playing with it, store it in a zip-lock bag or airtight container.

The play dough turned out beautifully — it always does. Lola even helped put the ingredients together — a little more or less of anything hardly matters. We made an orange batch and a teal batch. One particularly nice quality of a fresh batch is how it's still warm in the hands. Lola must have spent at least two hours playing with her dough, rolling it out into shapes, and making balls and squares. Maybe next time we'll try cookie cutters!

Nancy Dougherty enjoys poetry and crafts, and lives in Sebastopol with Dale, publisher of CRAFT.