Playdough Recipe Ingredients:

- 1 cup of flour
- 1/4 cup of salt
- 3/4 cup of water
- 3 tablespoons of lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil
- Food coloring
- Any seasonings or scents you would like

Making the Play Dough:

1. Add the water, oil and lemon juice to a medium non-stick pot and heat on medium heat on the stove (maybe even slightly lower heat depending on your stove).
2. Add food coloring, liquid scents or Kool-Aid to the water mixture.
3. In a mixing bowl, combine the flour, salt and any dry seasonings you are using.
4. After the water is hot, but not boiling, slowly add the dry ingredients to the pot and while mixing to combine. I use a wooden or plastic cooking spoon.
5. Continuously stir until the ingredients combine, dry out and begin to form a ball. If there are parts that seem a bit sticky still, just flatten the dough out and put the sticky side down on the bottom of the pot very briefly. Flip back and forth frequently until it doesn't seem sticky anymore. However, don't cook it too long. It is better to be a bit undercooked as it will firm up as it cools down.
6. Place on a sheet of wax paper until it cools down a bit. Then knead the dough for a minute or two to bring it all together.
Learning Activities

**Literacy**

**Make a Writing Kit for your child to practice writing:**
- Pens
- Plain White Paper
- Stapler (for making books)
- Magna Doodle
- Colored Pencils
- Colored copy paper
- Tape
- Notepads
- Thin Markers
- Envelopes
- Dry Erase Board
- Index Cards

**Shaving Cream**
Put a small amount of shaving cream on the table or on a tray. Spread it out and draw letters and numbers in the shaving cream with your finger. You may want to use a smock, but if it gets on clothes, it fades away after a few minutes. When it is time to clean up, rub the shaving cream until it disappears, then wash the table or tray.

**Pipe Cleaner Letters**
Use pipe cleaners (a.k.a. chenille stems) to form letters by bending them.

**Letter Memory Game**
Place 2-4 letter magnets (or cards with the letters written on them) on a tray. Cover them up with a cloth and take one away. Uncover the cloth, and ask your child which one is missing. You can also have your child write the letter on a piece of paper or dry erase board.

**Name**
Write your child's name on a piece of construction paper in large letters. Glue on yarn, beans or glitter. (ALWAYS, use an uppercase letter for the first letter of a name, but write the rest in lowercase letters.)

**Letter Sound Basket**
Give your child a basket and ask him or her to collect objects from around the house that begin with a particular letter.

**Mystery Sound Bag**
Place 3 or 4 objects that begin with a particular letter in a bag. For example, bowl, ball, block, book for the letter B. Have your child pull the items out one at the time and identify the beginning letter.

**Erase-the-Rhyme**
Draw a picture on a dry erase board and ask your child to erase things that rhyme. For example, draw a house, and ask your child to erase what rhymes with roof (roof), floor (door), ball (wall), blind (window). Or, draw a cat, and ask your child to erase what rhymes with tail (tail), tie (eye), nose (nose), mouth (nose), head (head), etc.
Science

Make a Science Kit:
Prism
Seashells
Rock Collection
Kaleidoscopes
Magnets
Magnifying Glass
Bug Box/ Critter Cage
Binoculars

Nature Walk
Go on a nature walk in your neighborhood or in the woods. Collect small sticks, rocks, leaves, wildflowers. You can use them later to make a nature collage or look at them through a magnifying glass.

Pond Nature Trip
Give your child a "pond study kit": magnifying glass, clear cup (for a water sample), plastic bags (for plant and dirt samples), craft sticks, plastic spoons, etc. Take a trip to a pond and let your child explore. Take a bag of bread crumbs for the ducks.

Magnets
Let your child experiment with various objects and classify them as magnetic or non-magnetic. You can use a paper clip, screw, penny, pen cap, cork, crayon, etc.

Chemical Reaction
Let your child experiment with baking soda and vinegar to make a chemical reaction. Put baking soda in a paper cup and vinegar in another cup. Add amounts of one ingredient to the other and watch what happens.

More Chemistry
You can also set out several ingredients and let your child experiment with the different textures (and reactions) the ingredients make. For solids, you can have cups of flour, baking soda, salt, sand, corn meal. For liquids, you can set out cups of water, oil, liquid soap, bubble bath. Add drops of food coloring for added fun.

Simple Machines: Ramps
Provide your child with blocks and small boards or cardboard to make ramps. Children can experiment with by rolling or sliding different objects down the ramps: blocks, boxes, cars, marbles, droplets of water, rocks.
Fine Motor Skills

Scissors & Play-dough
Let your child use scissors to cut play-dough. This helps build fine motor strength and helps them learn to use scissors.

Magazine Collage
Cut pictures from magazines and glue them onto a piece of construction paper. You can have your child cut out certain things, such as "things that begin with the letter A" or "red things" or "ocean animals", etc. You can also make books by stapling construction paper together and gluing each picture on a page.

Play-Dough Bakery
Use bowls, spoons, cookie cutters, cookie sheets, rolling pins, plates, cups, mini pie pans, muffin tins, and other things with play-dough.

More...
Legos
Puzzles
Light Bright

Art

Make an Art Kit:
Colored Construction Paper
Plain White Paper
Crayons
Markers
Scissors
Glue/Glue Stick
Colored Chalk
Oil Pastels
Water Color Paints
Tempera or Poster Paint
Tape
Collage Materials (beans, pasta, craft foam, cotton)
Popsicle Sticks
Math

Candy Math
Have your child use colored candy, such as Gummi candy, M & M's, Skittles, Runts, jelly beans, etc. Use them for sorting, counting, patterning activities.

Block Game
Use a numbered game die or spinner and some blocks. Take turns rolling the die, and taking the correct number of blocks from the pile. Build a tower with the blocks. After all the blocks are gone, compare the towers to see whose is the tallest.

Number Basketball
Write numbers on pieces of paper and place them on the floor. Place a trash can nearby. Call out a number for your child to find, crumble up and toss into the trash can.

Money Toss
Toss five pennies onto the table or floor. Count how many heads and tails.

Counting Books
Make counting books with stickers. Choose stickers that will appeal to your child (Barbie, Harry Potter, trains, horses, etc.) Staple pieces of paper together and label each page with a number. Have your child stick the correct amount of stickers on each page of the book. You could make the "Spiderman Counting Book" or "Dora the Explorer Counting Book".

Path Games
Path games are great for counting practice because a child rolls the dice or spins a spinner and counts how many spaces to move. You can buy them or make your own path games with stickers.

Card Games
You can use playing cards in several ways:
Have your child match two of the same numbers,
Have your child put the numbers in sequential order,
Play war (Two players take the top card from their own pile, compare them, and the player with the highest number wins that round and collects both cards.)
**Number Writing Rhymes:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number Writing Rhyme</th>
<th>Rhyme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Round and round and round we go</td>
<td>Start at the top</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When we get home We have a zero.</td>
<td>And down we run</td>
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<td></td>
<td>That's the way we make a one.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Around and back</td>
<td>Around a tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the railroad track</td>
<td>Around a tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two, two, two!</td>
<td>That's the way we make a three.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Down and over</td>
<td>Down and around</td>
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<tr>
<td>And down some more</td>
<td>With a flag on high</td>
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<tr>
<td>That's the way we make a four.</td>
<td>That's the way we make a five.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Around to a loop</td>
<td>Across the sky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number six rolls a hoop.</td>
<td>And down from heaven</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That's the way we make a seven.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make an “S” and do not wait</td>
<td>Make a loop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When we get home</td>
<td>And then a line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have an eight.</td>
<td>That's the way we make a nine.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Colors and Shapes**

**REVIEW SHAPES**

- circle
- rectangle
- triangle
- square

*Name* the shape at the beginning of each row.
*Circle* the other shape in that row that is the same.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Circle" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Square" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Triangle" /></td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Rectangle" /></td>
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<td><img src="image" alt="Square" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Triangle" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Colors and Shapes

Shape Patterns

Look at the shapes in each row. Draw the next shape in the pattern.

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Looking at the shapes in each row, draw the next shape in the pattern.
Rhymes

Look at the first picture in each row. Circle the picture that rhymes with it. Color the pictures.
Look at the first picture in each row. Circle the picture that rhymes with it. Color the pictures.

Rhymes

1. Sock, dog, bag, blob
2. Fan, fish, star, skillet
3. Frog, rooster, log, sock
4. Hat, boot, cat, apple
Scissor Skills: Cut along the parade route.
Things That Go Together

Draw a line between the things that go together. Draw your line inside the path provided between the items. Color the pictures.
Scissor Skills

Use your scissors to cut from the black square to the black dot. Try and cut along the dotted line!
Fishy Fun

Cut out the fish on the bottom of the page.
Glue each fish into the tank that has the same shape as the fish.

This fish tank is a circle

This fish tank is a square

This fish tank is a diamond

This fish tank is an oval

This fish tank is a triangle
Booklist

Look for these books at the library:

Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus, by Mo Willems
Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late, by Mo Willems
The Pigeon Wants a Hot Dog, by Mo Willems
The Pigeon Wants a Puppy, by Mo Willems
Knuffle Bunny, by Mo Willems
Knuffle Bunny, Too, by Mo Willems
Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes, by Eric Litwin
Pete the Cat: Rocking in My School Shoes, by Eric Litwin
Pete the Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons, by Eric Litwin
Go Away Big Green Monster, by Ed Emberly
Corduroy, by Don Freeman
Goldilocks and the Three Bears, retold by Jan Brett
The Very Clumsy Click Beetle, by Eric Carle
Three Billy Goats Gruff, retold by Stephen Carpenter
The Little Red Hen, retold by Jerry Pinkney
Does a Kangaroo Have a Mother, Too?, by Eric Carle
Hedgie's Surprise, by Jan Brett
Mrs. Wishy Washy's Farm, by Joy Cowley
The Hat, by Jan Brett
The Tale of Peter Rabbit, by Beatrix Potter
Owl Babies, by Martin Waddell
A House for Hermit Crab, by Eric Carle
Mister Seahorse, by Eric Carle
Big Al, by Andrew Clements
Unlovable, by Dan Yaccarino
It's the Bear, Jez Alborough
An Extraordinary Egg, by Leo Lionni
The Umbrella, by Jan Brett
Who is the Beast?, by Keith Baker
Duck in the Truck, by Jez Alborough
Captain Duck, by Jez Alborough
Cuddly Duddly, by Jez Alborough
There's an Alligator Under My Bed, by Mercer Mayer
Caps for Sale, by Esphyr Slobodkina
David Gets in Trouble, by David Shannon
Bill and Pete, by Tomie de Paola
Bill and Pete Go Down the Nile, by Tomie de Paola
The Doghouse, by Jan Thomas
Rhyming Dust Bunnies, by Jan Thomas
Websites

www.starfall.com
www.literacycenter.net
www.janbrett.com

For parents:
http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/CompactforReading/index.html

Kids Activities Blog:
http://kidsactivitiesblog.com/

PreKinders: Activities for Pre-K & Kindergarten Kids
www.prekinders.com
10 Kindergarten Readiness Skills Your Child Needs

What do teachers really want your child to know on the first day of kindergarten? Kindergarten is changing and parents are feeling pressure to prepare their children for their first school experience. But while some may fret that reading and doing addition are prerequisites for kindergarten these days, your child likely possesses many of the skills she needs to be successful as she begins school.

"Some of the things I would like my kids to know coming into kindergarten are their letters and some sounds, recognition of numbers 1-10, be able to write and recognize their name and be able to cut with scissors," says kindergarten teacher Nicole Barton. "It is also important for them to be able to follow directions and to have the ability to express their feelings."

Here are the 10 kindergarten readiness skills to focus on as you work with your child. Don't be concerned if she does not have them all down before the first day of kindergarten, as she will continue to work on them throughout the year. Try a few activities listed for the skills your child might need to work on a bit more before she starts school.

1. Writing
   - Help your child practice writing letters, especially the letters in her name.
   - Teach your child how to write her name with an uppercase first letter and the remaining letters in lowercase.
   - Write in shaving cream in the bathtub, salt or sugar in a cake pan or in finger paint to make practicing more fun and multisensory.

2. Letter Recognition
   - Play games to help your child recognize some letters of the alphabet.
   - Play hide and seek with refrigerator magnets.
   - Rather than drilling your child with flashcards, use them to play a game of alphabet go fish.

3. Beginning Sounds
   - Make your child aware of the sound that each letter makes.
   - Find items around the house that begin with the same sound and identify the letter that makes each sound.
   - Overemphasize the first sound in words to help your child hear the individual sounds in words.

4. Number Recognition and Counting
   - Count throughout the day (for example, the crackers she is eating for snack or the socks in that you take out of the dryer).
   - Point out numbers you see in your environment and have your child name them (for example, the numbers found on food boxes or street signs).
5. Shapes and Colors
- If your child is having trouble recognizing certain colors, you might add a little food coloring to cookie dough, milk or vanilla pudding to emphasize those colors.
- Help your child recognize more difficult shapes such as diamonds and rectangles by showing her how to draw them on paper and cut them out.
- Play games in which your child finds objects of particular colors and shapes around the house or in the neighborhood as you drive.

6. Fine Motor Skills
- Give your child several different writing options (colored pencils, crayons or markers) to help keep her interested in writing and drawing.
- Playing with play dough is a fun way to strengthen the muscles of the hand that will be used for writing.

7. Cutting
- Purchase a good pair of child-safe scissors and let your child practice.
- Give her old magazines or newspapers to cut up, or allow her to make a collage of the things she likes by cutting them from magazines and gluing them to a piece of paper.
- Cutting play dough is also fun for children.

8. Reading Readiness
- Run your finger under the words as you read to your child to help her learn that words go from left to right and top to bottom.
- Play games with rhyming words to help your child hear similar sounds in words. For example, as you are going up the stairs, name one word that rhymes with cat for each step as you go up.

9. Attention and Following Directions
- Read lots of stories with your child and work up to reading longer chapter books, one chapter each night or as long as she remains interested and focused.
- Give your child two and three step directions. For example: "put on your pajamas, brush your teeth and pick a book to read."
- Play Simon Says with two or three step directions. For example: "Simon Says jump up and down and shout hooray."

10. Social Skills
- Give your children opportunities to interact with other children in preschool, church or social groups or play dates.
- Teach your child how to express her feelings if she doesn't like something.
- Role-play different situations she might experience on the playground or at school. Help her find solutions for typical problems she might encounter.

Chances are you're already practicing many of these skills your child will need for kindergarten. Remember to keep it fun and don't make it stressful for you or your child. With just a little fun practice, your child will be prepared for her elementary school debut!

By Traci Gelser
Updated on Jul 30, 2013