

Paint Stretchers and Recipes

Liquid Starch - the light blue or white liquid that comes in plastic bottles.

It can be added to liquid tempera to stretch, add gloss, and help it stick to a variety of surfaces or mixed with powdered paint to make it smooth and thick.

For finger-painting, pour a little directly on the paper and sprinkle with powdered tempera or chalk.

Wheat Paste - the cheapest kind of wallpaper paste – powder form.

Keep it near your easel for paint that has been thinned too much with water.

Add by spoonfuls (just one goes a long way) to the paint, stir, and wait a moment for it to thicken, if too thick, add more water!

Liquid Dishwashing Detergent - I put a generous squirt of this soap into whatever paint I mix up, for help with cleaning, and stretching it. (Pretty much eliminates the need to purchase “washable” paints.)

Make Your Own Finger Paint

Ivory Snow/ Dreft - Whip together 2 parts of powdered detergent and 1 part water until thick and creamy. Add powdered or liquid tempera, or food coloring.

This keeps well in a plastic container with a lid. If it becomes stiff, just add a few drops of water a whip it again. (Children can do it with eggbeaters, or you can do it with an electric mixer.)

Shaving Cream Finger-Paint - Mainly I think the best use is just plain, without any added color, on table tops (especially ones you need to clean) Just squirt it directly on the table and have fun. At home the sides of the bathtub, kitchen sink, or tile work well. Don't worry about it getting on clothes etc... it just disappears. When you are finished, keep a dishpan of clear water with a lot of small sponges (I cut them in ½ for small hands) Let them clean it all up the result will be a very clean good smelling room and they really enjoy this. **WARNING:** Most young children do not understand the concept of squeezing the water out of the sponge before they carry it to the table - you need to be there to do the squeezing!!

Argo Starch - or any other brand of powdered laundry starch. You add one cup of starch to one cup of cold water, mix well. Put in a pot on the stove and add 5 cups of hot water, stir well, and cook on medium heat until it gets very thick.

You can let it cool and separate it into tubs for coloring to have translucent finger paint.

Or - Add 1 cup Ivory soap flakes (or powder) and stir well. Separate into cups and add tempera or food coloring. Cover to store, keeps well.

Use it on finger-paint paper, freezer paper, paper plates, or wax paper.

It's really worth the work. It has a wonderful slippery feel, and cleans up easily

When you introduce play dough to the class it should be plain (no color) and put out by itself **NO COOKIE CUTTERS** So children can explore it with their hands

(developing those pincher muscles that need to hold a pencil later!). Then put it out

with color. If you do feel the need to add something to it later in the year, try adding things that allow freedom of expression, like plastic knives, (this is a great way for children to learn to handle a table knife for later cutting food.) Popsicle sticks, potato mashers, or a meat tenderizer (wood) for pounding.

Play Dough Recipes

Standard Play Dough -I double this amount for a nursery school but this is a good amount for home.

Place 2 cups water in a saucepan and boil with ½ cup salt until salt dissolves. Add desired coloring (food coloring, a pkg. Of unsweetened kool aid, or tempera) and 2 Tablespoons salad oil and 2 Tablespoons Cream of Tartar (this preserves it) and 2 cups flour. Stir well until it forms a clump. Turn it out onto a floured surface, and let cool for a while, knead well. When it is still warm, but cool enough for children I always invite them to help me do the squeezing ... it's a necessary part of the recipe.

It keeps well in a Ziploc bag...for months.

Glitter can be added to it for "glitter" play dough.

I also like the old standard recipe of just mixing 2 cups flour with ½ cup salt, a little oil and water ... with out cooking Add color and knead well. It's a nice change in texture and the children can help with putting it together and mixing it up.

Sit with your children at the play dough table ... DO NOT make examples for them, but show them the skills of rolling the dough on the table with your hand, or rolling it together between your palms to make balls. See what imprints you can make with different parts of your hand.

A Good Hardening Dough: Salt Ceramic

2 cups salt, 2/3 cups water, 1-cup cornstarch. Mix the salt and 2/3 cup water in a saucepan, stirring until well heated, 3-4 minutes. Remove from heat. Mix in cornstarch and ½ cup cold water. Stir quickly. If it does not form a lump of dough like consistency, return to the heat and cook, stirring constantly until it does!

This dough can be rolled or shaped in anyway you like. Just let it air dry for a few days. It dries rock hard and crystal white. You can paint it or use markers on it if you like.

This keeps well in a Ziploc bag – indefinitely!

Shampoo Play Dough - good for making beads to harden (wrap around a straw)

Mix and knead together: ¾ cup flour, ¼ cup white glue, ¼ cup thick shampoo.

To make pieces stick together, dip in water and stick. Can be dried and painted.

Sawdust Dough Combine 2 cups sawdust, 3 cups flour, 1 cup salt and enough water to make dough. This dough does not keep well, but becomes very hard when dried (you can even sand it).

Microwave Play Dough

2 cups flour, ½ cup cornstarch, 1 cup salt, 1 Tablespoon Cream of Tartar, 1 T. oil, 2 cups water. Combine all ingredients. Microwave 5 minutes or more, stopping to stir every minute or so, until it becomes a dough consistency. Cool. Knead in color.

This dough is very elastic and springy. Keep in a Ziploc.

Collage Dough - This dough provides a unique early experience for young children with collage. It only requires them to place the pieces in the dough – eliminating the middle process of turning something over, placing glue on the back and turning it over to place it on a surface. It can also be re-arranged many times on the day it is made - it takes about 3 days to really harden.

Combine Equal Parts of Salt and Flour; mix with enough water to make dough.

It will keep for a while in a Ziploc bag. Children can help mix it up and knead it until smooth. I do not add any coloring at all.

I use plastic lids from margarine tubs or cool whip; small solo plates work well too and provide a nice “frame” for it.

Give each child a small ball of dough and have them squish it and flatten it until it fills the given space. THEN get out whatever materials you are going to use for collage - Seeds, (a variety of beans and seeds - Indian corn is beautiful), or try beads, shells and small pebbles, or macaroni shapes.

Press the small pieces into the dough in whatever design they like. If they change their minds about what they like, remove the pieces and pat the dough smooth again and simply start over.