

Activities for nursery children to do at home

Den building is an activity which all children enjoy and can provide a special place for children to be.

We have provided some ideas for you to support your child's play at den building.

Have fun!

Den building supports children to:

- Explore arranging and using resources flexibly.
- Create their own space to have peace and quiet, to hide, to look at books to play with their favourite toys.
- Interact and negotiate ideas with other children and adults.
- Talk about shapes space and size.
- Be creative and think imaginatively.
- Suggest ideas and problem solve.
- Explore and learn how to use tools and materials safely and with control

Den building

Suggestions for den making resources

- Tables and chairs
- Cloths, tarpaulins, blankets
- Clothes airers
- String, tape, pegs, glue
- Garden canes
- Large cardboard boxes or boxes deconstructed
- Pens and chalks
- Magazines pictures for cutting and pasting
- Leaves, branches and twigs
- Cushions



There are many things children can use for making dens

- Suspend fabric from door frames and window sills.
- Cover a table or chairs with cloths, sheets, blankets, ground sheets.
- Clothes airers, make especially good frames for dens.
- Add sleeping bags and other camping equipment or picnic food.
- Small tents make fantastic dens.
- Big cardboard boxes can be used on their sides to make spaces to crawl into with cushions.
- Alternatively flatten the boxes and support the children to join them with tape and cut doors and windows from them to look through.
- Help the children to cut pictures from magazines to glue and decorate the walls.
- Help the children to write numbers and names for their dens.

Making Playdough

Play dough recipe

There are many ways to make play dough but we find this recipe the best.

2 cups of plain flour

1 cup of salt

2 cups of water

2 tablespoons of oil

2 teaspoons of cream of tartar

(to stop play-dough being too sticky)

Ice cream tub or similar to store. Play-dough will keep for up to 2 weeks

- Mix all ingredients together.

Either

- Boil in a heavy saucepan, stirring continuously until resembles scrambled egg
- or**
- Put in microwave for 2 minutes. Stir, and then return to microwave until firm to touch.
- Take care lifting as will be extremely hot.
- Empty onto a floured surface and knead into ball when cooled

Suggestions for play dough resources

- Plastic chopping board /mat
- Children's plastic cutlery
- Food cutters
- Pastry or pizza wheel
- Small plastic rolling pin
- Storage container
- Plastic apron
- Large heavy saucepan or large microwavable bowl

Safety points to consider

- Do not leave young children unattended when playing with play dough as they are only beginning to learn about using tools safely.

Play dough supports children to:

- Develop fine motor physical skills for using hands and tools
 - Develop hand– eye co-ordination
 - Talk about shapes space and size.
 - Understand and learn to use new vocabulary
 - Interact and negotiate ideas with other children and adults.
 - Be creative and think imaginatively.
 - Suggest ideas and problem solve.
- Explore and learn how to use tools and materials safely and with control.

There are many things you can do with play dough at home

- Make play dough in different colours by adding food colouring
- Add different textures and scents to encourage children to use sensory play e.g. add glitter, rice, baby oil, ginger
- Explore changing the dough with hands—use words such as poke, squeeze, pull, twist, roll, squash
- Explore flattening dough with hands or other objects. Try using textured rolling pins or surfaces. You could put string on a rolling pin and see what happens. Use lego/duplo, colanders, anything with a texture. Talk about the shapes and patterns imprinted.
- Use cutters of different sizes, talk about the shapes and sizes big, bigger, smaller.