

St Margaret's CE Primary School

Developmental Stages of Playdough



The Discovery Stage: Age 3-4

- “piled” and stacked shapes and clumps
- very little detail
- squishing, pinching and poking
- pounding and hitting of playdough pieces with hands and tools

This stage is characterized by the pure sensory experience of the playdough. Attention is on the manipulation and exploration of the playdough for the sheer pleasure of it.

The language of this play at this stage is push, poke, squish, pinch, pound, “Watch this!”

tall ■ build ■ stack ■ pat ■ cut
 ■ squeeze ■ squash ■ bang ■ clap
 ■ tear



The Shape and Form Stage: Age 4-5

- simple, recognizable forms
- more detail such as mouth and eyes
- beginning of “rolling” coiled, snake-like forms
- begins to make balls
- rolling out and cutting out of forms from cookie cutters and “pretending”

This stage is characterized by having a purpose in using the playdough. Children are engaged in how they can create something out of the playdough. “Things” are made and destroyed.

The language of this play is the narrative of the imagination.

■ short ■ long ■ thin ■ collect / pick up
 ■ fold ■ spread ■ pinch ■ tuck ■ beat



Schematic: Age 6-7-years-old

- Standing forms and objects
- attention to the details
- making balls and three-dimensional shapes
- Designs that have patterns and repetitions
- Using basic forms to create people and things in vertical position

This stage is characterized by the child's impulse to create. The playdough becomes more clay-like as children build and create people, dogs, and other things from not only their imagination but their daily lives.

The language of this stage is creativity.

■ wide ■ mould ■ flatten ■ pluck ■ construct ■ collapse ■ grip ■ snip ■ beat ■ words to support writing *e.g. arch, flick, under, line, space, neat, below* ■ filter ■ pipe ■ fasten ■ resources ■ tools ■ tap ■ scoop ■ repeat
 words to support writing/mark making *e.g. line, circle, back, hold, pencil grip, over, arch, dot, cross, a bit, curl/y, zig-zag, tail, curly, straight, cross*