**MONTHLY PLAYDOUGH REQUIREMENTS**

Play dough should be changed out the first week of each month. Every month, you will be making 3 batches of play dough for the classrooms (2 for Ms. Melissa and 1 for Ms. Rona). The colors by month, recipe, and cooking tips follow below. Put each batch of dough in an airtight container or 1 gallon Ziploc bag. Monthly colors reinforce themes in class for that particular month.

Based on the cost of ingredients (non-sale prices) at a Fred Meyer supermarket, I calculated the cost per batch at approximately $4.18. That would make it $12.55 for the 3 batches per month and just under $113 for the total cost of play dough ingredients for the 9 month school year. I heard that you can get reimbursed for the cost of ingredients. I never got around to asking about the process and I thought that the school could use that money for other uses so I considered it a financial donation to the school. If you want to get reimbursed, submit an expense report to the Treasurer on the Board of Directors.

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|  | **MS. MELISSA (2 BATCHES)** | **MS. RONA (1 BATCH)** |
| **SEPT** | Red | Red |
| **OCT** | Orange | Orange |
| **NOV** | Brown\* | Brown\* |
| **DEC** | Green w/ Glitter \*\* | Green |
| **JAN** | White w/ Glitter \*\* | White w/ Glitter \*\* |
| **FEB** | Pink | Pink |
| **MARCH** | Light Green | Light Green |
| **APRIL** | Yellow | Yellow |
| **MAY** | Blue | Blue |

\* I tried mixing a couple of secondary colors to make brown, but it looked more like a purplish gray. It may work better if you try adding some unsweetened cocoa to make the color closer to brown.

\*\* Ask the teachers if they have some large-flaked glitter that you can use for the dough since they may have some in their supply stash so you don’t have to buy it yourself.

**PLAYDOUGH RECIPE (Yields 1 batch of play dough)**

1/4 cup vegetable oil
4 cups warm water
2 cups salt
4 cups flour
2 Tablespoons cream of tartar

Preheat the pot over low heat while you gather your ingredients. Pour and swirl the vegetable oil to cover the bottom of the pot. Pour in rest of ingredients and stir over low heat. The dough will begin to thicken until it resembles mashed potatoes. Keep mixing. The dough will eventually pull away from the sides and clump in the center. Turn the clump of dough over on itself while splitting the dough along the middle to expose any wet parts of the interior. When the dough has the drier consistency of play dough, remove the pan from heat and allow the dough to cool enough to handle. (It takes about 15 minutes for the dough to finish cooking once all the ingredients are in the pot.) Add food coloring & knead until color is well incorporated.

**TIPS:**

* The dough gets really thick and heavy so you will want something sturdy for mixing. A wooden spoon is a good choice.
* Use a large pot to make the dough since each batch uses a little more than 10 cups of ingredients and you want lots of room to stir without spillage. I use a 10 quart (40 cup) stockpot.
* Do not try and save time by making multiple batches at once or cooking the dough at medium or high heat for part of the time. The dough will initially look and feel fine. However, after a couple of days, it will get really soft and stick to everything (which will annoy the classroom cleanup crew). I’m guessing that if you try and take any of these shortcuts, the water does not get completely incorporated into the dough and causes the texture to deteriorate after a while.
* If you’re doing 3 batches of dough in a row, dump the clump of dough on a table to cool off. Knead it for about a minute until it’s smooth and shape into a oval. Let it cool off on the table while you make your other batches. When the dough is cooling, it may get a crust on the outside. Just knead the dough periodically so that the warm, moister interior gets mixed with the cool, crusty exterior until the whole mound is smooth again. If it’s still a bit warm after kneading in the food coloring, drape a gallon size Ziploc bag over the top & sides so it can cool while minimizing crusting.
* Don’t put dough in a Ziploc bag until it’s completely cool. If it’s warm, condensation can build up in the bag and there’s a possibility that the dough could go rancid.
* Here is a link to a site which provides photos of the dough making process:
<http://www.instructables.com/id/How-to-Make-Playdough-Play-doh/step2/Mix-and-heat/>