



TEACHING TOOLS AND ACTIVITIES

PLAY-DOH GARDEN

 Collaboration

Collaboration –including being able to compromise and share resources – is an increasingly important 21st Century skill[13]. While young children are not typically thought of as collaborators, research suggests they are “natural helpers”[14] capable of sharing, helping, and cooperating with peers, when working together on a common activity[15]. Getting little ones to cooperate meaningfully with a peer can be quite an undertaking but when you present kids with the challenge of co-designing their very own Play-Doh garden, you give them an opportunity to engage in beneficial collaboration. During this activity, kids work together to design a garden of their liking and then build it with their favorite Play-Doh colors.



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

**PLAY-DOH
COMPOUND -
MULTIPLE COLORS**



- **LARGE PAPER**
- **MARKERS**
- **FLAT WORK SURFACE**



WHAT TO DO

STEP 1

Lay out a large piece of paper. Ask the kids to draw a garden using colorful markers. Ask questions to help generate ideas like “what’s in or around your garden? Flowers? Vegetables? A Fence? Flower pots?



STEP 2

Encourage them to work together by collaborating on the same garden, rather than each making their own.



STEP 3

Finally, have the kids create the objects in their drawing using Play-Doh compound. Watch as they transition their flat design into a colorful 3D garden.



FUN TIPS

Throughout the project, encourage kids to build off of each other’s thinking and respond to each other’s ideas. While they are drawing and creating, facilitate their work by helping them share space, tasks, and materials. At the end of the activity, highlight the benefits of how great it is for them to work together, and remind them how this couldn’t have been done without all of them helping!



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POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THIS ACTIVITY

With your participation and incorporating the “Fun Tips,” this activity can give kids opportunities to explore a variety of concepts and work on skills, including:

Collaboration

- Engaging in tasks that work toward a common goal
- Identifying roles in a group activity
- Building capacity to be a natural helper in everyday interaction

Sharing

- Experiencing how it feels to work together on a common goal
- Taking turns using materials

Conflict Resolution

- Kids taking initiative to sort out their own differences

Understanding Emotions

- Recognizing how others think and feel by talking about what each person wants to do and why

References

- [13] Hanover Research. 2011. A Crosswalk of 21st Century Skills. Hanover Research – District Administration Practice.
- [14] R Rende, J Prosek. 2015. Raising Can-Do Kids: Giving Children the Tools to Thrive in a Fast-Changing World. New York: Perigee / Penguin
- [15]N White et al. 2014. “It’s Mine!” Does Sharing with Siblings at Age 3 Predict Sharing with Siblings, Friends, and Unfamiliar Peers at Age 6? Early Education and Development, 25, 185-201.