

## FEELINGS INSPECTORS RESOURCE

### Self Care

# Cloud Dough Feelings Monsters and Emotion Portraits

## About this activity

This activity encourages the children to reflect on the benefits of sensory and free play and creative expression.

## What do we need?

Recipe for no cook cloud dough:

4 cups cornflour

2 cups inexpensive hair conditioner (coconut conditioner works well)

Food colouring (optional)

You could make this prior to the session. Instructions below

## Check-in

At Children's Parliament, we start every session with a check-in. Children love these short activities, and they are a vital piece of our rights-based practice. Choose a check-in using our [Feelings Inspectors Check-in Kit](#).



Keeping your  
hands busy  
makes your  
mind rest.



## Making the no cook dough

Place the cornflour in a large bowl.

Mix in the hair conditioner with your hands - it will just start coming together and it will be pliable and very, very smooth. If desired, add a drop or two of food colouring. You may need to add more conditioner as you go. Keep covered when not in use.

Additions to the dough can include dried lavender, essential oils, chocolate sprinkles, twigs, dried peppermint leaves, chopped rose petals, shells - the possibilities are endless. Rolling pins and a selection of cutters can also be used, but these sometimes limit creativity.

Butter Dough can be bought commercially and is a good choice for children with sensory processing disorders and others who do not enjoy getting their hands dirty as it is non sticky. To use the dough you have made with children with these issues, gloves can be worn or the playdough can be put in a zip lock bag and played with by using a rolling pin and a selection of household materials sourced for making imprints.

## Instructions

Invite the children to make dough and then add natural materials (dried peppermint leaves, lavender etc) to provide a sensory experience that includes touch and smell. Hundreds and thousands or dry rice can be used to add texture. Children can be given their own supplies and choose what to add. You can make plain dough in advance for everyone then divide it up and allow the children to add food colouring and texture to their individual pieces of dough.



## Cloud Dough Feelings Monsters and Emotion Portraits

The children can discuss the feeling of the cloud dough on their senses as they are encouraged to reflect on the benefits of sensory and free play and creative expression. Ask if they notice how kneading the cloud dough can release tension from arms, fingers and hands. What effects do the added smells and colours have on them? This may be calming or energising, depending on what has been added to the dough.

**Useful tip**

The children start off with free play and then are encouraged to make feelings monster sculptures and/or to make emotion portraits by using the cloud dough to put expressions onto pre-drawn/printed faces. The faces can either be drawn by the children or downloaded online and printed out beforehand.

Children can easily replicate these activities themselves at home.

### **Other sensory wellbeing activities to try:**

Ice cubes containing flowers and natural materials which melt and change shape as you play with them - a good one to try on hot summer days.

Spaghetti cooked with different colour food dyes make excellent "worms".

A simple tray of sand, shells and seaweed from the beach can ignite the senses.

## **A mindful moment**

At Children's Parliament, we end every session with a mindful moment to reflect on the session and wind-down. Choose a mindful moment using our [Feelings Inspectors Mindful Moment Kit](#).