

Play-Doh Letter Smash & Read Fun!

Materials Needed: Play-Doh (various colors), Letter cards (uppercase and lowercase) OR a laminated letter mat, Wipeable surface or placemat, Optional: CVC word picture cards, Optional: Small rolling pin.

Lesson Activities:

Introduction (5 minutes)

Gather the materials. Say: "Today, we're going to have some super fun squishing Play-Doh AND learn about letters and words! Are you ready to play?" Show the Play-Doh and letter cards/mat. Briefly review a few letter sounds the student knows well to build confidence.

Activity 1: Letter Formation & Smash (10-15 minutes)

Choose one of these methods based on student preference or learning goal:

- **Forming Letters:** Call out a letter name or sound. Encourage the student to roll the Play-Doh into 'snakes' and then shape the Play-Doh into the uppercase and lowercase forms of that letter. Provide guidance as needed.
- **Letter Smash:** Lay out several letter cards or use the letter mat. Call out a letter name or sound. The student identifies the correct letter and enthusiastically 'smashes' a small ball of Play-Doh onto it! Repeat with different letters, focusing on ones the student is currently learning.

Offer plenty of praise for effort and correct identification/formation. "Wow, you made a great 'S'!" or "Zap! You found the 'T'!"

Activity 2: CVC Word Building (10-15 minutes)

Focus on simple CVC (Consonant-Vowel-Consonant) words like 'cat', 'dog', 'sun', 'pig', 'map', 'run', 'sit'.

1. Choose a CVC word. Using a picture card can be helpful.
2. Say the word slowly, emphasizing each sound: "Let's build the word 'cat'. Listen: /c/ /a/ /t/."
3. Ask the student: "What sound do you hear first in 'cat'? /c/ /c/ /c/... What letter makes that sound?" Help identify the letter 'C'.
4. Have the student either form the letter 'C' with Play-Doh or find the 'C' letter card.
5. Repeat for the middle vowel sound (/a/ = 'A') and the final consonant sound (/t/ = 'T').
6. Place the Play-Doh letters or letter cards in order to spell the word.
7. Guide the student to blend the sounds together: "Let's read the word we built! Touch each letter and say its sound: /c/ ... /a/ ... /t/. Now faster: c-a-t... cat! Great job!"
8. Repeat with 2-4 different CVC words, depending on the student's engagement level.

Wrap-up & Assessment (5 minutes)

Review the letters and words practiced. Ask the student to build one specific CVC word (perhaps one they built earlier) more independently using the Play-Doh letters or letter cards as a quick check for understanding. Praise their hard work: "You were a fantastic Play-Doh word builder today! Look at the letters and words you made!" Clean up the materials together.