

2. Ask the children to paint their square white.
3. After the rugs have dried, help each child square off a section and paint it dark blue.
4. Show them where to paint red stripes.
5. After the blue section has dried, encourage the children to sponge paint white stars.
6. These make great welcome mats for 4th of July, or sit-upons in the classroom.

★ Lisa Chichester, Parkersburg, WV

Homemade Sidewalk Chalk

Materials

Plaster of Paris • water • tempera paint • empty toilet tissue tubes • duct tape

What to do

1. Mix the plaster of Paris with water until it is runny.
2. Add tempera paint until it is the desired color.
3. Tape the bottom of the cardboard tube.
4. Pour the plaster of Paris in the toilet tissue tube and let it dry.
5. Remove the toilet tissue tube and use the sidewalk chalk.

Tip: Find small boxes such as gift boxes and make different shapes of sidewalk chalk.

★ Jean Potter, Charleston, WV

Silly Putty

Materials

Large bowl • white glue • measuring cup • food coloring, optional • liquid starch • large spoon • zipper-closure baggie or container with airtight lid

What to do

1. Pour one cup of glue into a bowl. If using food coloring, add it to the glue.
2. Add one cup of liquid starch to the glue.
3. Encourage the children to use a large spoon to stir the mixture. Keep mixing until it congeals, and then pour off the extra liquid.
4. The silly putty should be used in a sand and water table or on a table. It is best to use in a tiled-floor area—it can be difficult to remove from carpeting and clothing.
5. This is a great activity for strengthening fine motor skills and sensory exploration. As the putty becomes drier, it becomes more taut. It can be fun for children to use child-safe scissors to cut it.
6. Store in an airtight container. It can last up to a couple of weeks.

★ Sandra L. Nagel, White Lake, MI

Grass Playdough

Materials

Homemade playdough (see recipe below) • small containers • scissors • grass clippings

What to do

1. Let the children help make playdough according to the recipe on the next page.
2. Give the children scissors and a small container. Take them outdoors and let them use the scissors to clip some grass and put it into their containers. Encourage them to clip the grass and not pull it up by the roots.

(continued on the next page)