



Sensory Learning Opportunity: Moon Salt-Dough Sculptures

Key Learning Skills: Scientific inquiry, creative expression, social-emotional, fine motor, hand-eye coordination, imagination, creativity, language, attending, literacy

Suggested Materials:

- A tray for the moon salt-dough to dry upon
- Wax paper
- Large bowl and spoon to mix dough
- Materials for the salt-dough:

Recipe #1: (feel free to halve the recipe as well)

- **4 cups flour, 2 cups salt, 2 cups water, 2 T cream of tartar**
- When the dough dries (might take a few days) kids can paint their moon and/or add glitter glue on top of the moon

Recipe # 2: (feel free to halve the recipe as well)

- 2 cups all-purpose flour*
- 1 cup salt
- 1 cup water
- Large sheet of paper and a marker for the KWL chart
- Rock (for demonstrating craters)

If you do not have the supplies for moon-salt dough you can always complete this activity using play-doh! It will not dry the same, but it will still be a fun sensory activity

Resources:

- “Moon: A Peek Through Picture Book” By Britta Teckentrup or any book/story about the moon. Look on YouTube, Audible, or any other story time source!
- Pictures of the moon - check the internet for great images!

Directions:

- If kids are old enough, start with a “KWL” about the moon
 - K = write down what your child already knows about the moon/prior knowledge of the moon. Can be as simple as “it’s in the sky” or “the moon is round”
 - W = what kids “wonder” about the moon. You can also model some questions you have about the moon. This is a great way to get kids curious about the moon and outer space
 - The L will come later after some research, when you figure out what kids have learned about the moon after some investigation
 - It is helpful to write the KWL on paper so kids can see their ideas and come back to the L after you have done some further learning. This is a great concrete way to see all the learning that has taken place after doing some research!

- Read or listen to the book, “Moon: A Peek Through Picture Book” By Britta Teckentrup or any other book about the moon. Check you-tube if you do not have a book about the moon or check the online library
- Show children pictures of the moon for reference
- Reflect upon the moon - inquiry based questions (The W on the KWL chart) could include:
 - “What is the moon made of?”
 - Why does the shape of the moon appear to change?”
 - “Do we share the moon with any other planets?”
 - “How does the moon help?”
 - “What shape is a full moon?”
 - “Is the moon smooth or bumpy? What is a crater?”
 - “What color is the moon?”
 - “What impact does the moon have on the earth?”
 - “How do people get to the moon?”

This can be some pretty advanced thinking for toddlers, so feel free to alter this activity to make it developmentally appropriate for your child! If you have older kids, the inquiry based questions can be really great.

- Pour flour into a bowl. Before mixing up the salt dough, demonstrate dropping a rock into the flour to show how a crater forms. Let kids try out dropping the rock into the bowl of flour.
- Model creating a moon and how to poke fingers into dough softly to make craters. Children can make any iteration of a moon shape, from a full moon to a crescent moon!
- Kids will improve fine motor skills while shaping and forming dough and display creativity through sculpting (option to create additional sculptures out of salt dough for children who want to continue the sensory learning)

Extension:

- Think of other books and songs about the moon - “Goodnight Moon”, “I see the Moon and the Moon sees me”, “Zoom Zoom Zoom We’re Going to the Moon”, or the show “Let’s Go, Luna” on PBS, etc.
- For older kids, make a Venn diagram and compare/contrast the sun and the moon
- Writing prompt: “I like the moon because...”
- Find out about how many moons other planets have
- Listen to the songs “The Moon/Moon Songs for Kids” on YouTube, “The Moon Song” for kids by Baby Bum, “Zoom Zoom Zoom” by the Kiboomers, or “Time to Shine” by StoryBots
- Make moon craters in the sand box
- Check out the moon at night - chart the changing of the shape or just bask in the beauty of the moon!