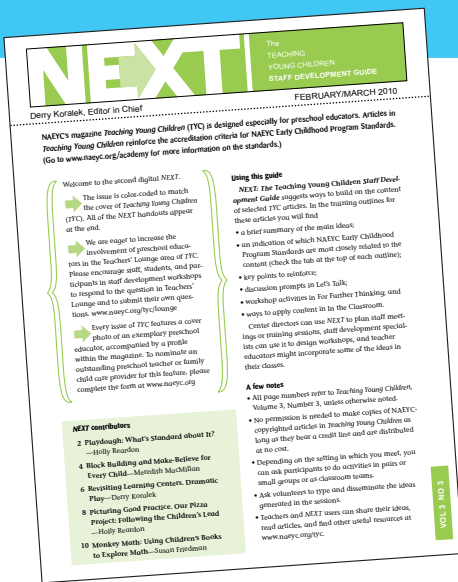


Are you responsible for staff development?



➔ Subscribe to *NEX: The Teaching Young Children Staff Development Guide*.

What's inside:

- Discussion questions
- Workshop activities
- Ways to apply the content in the classroom
- Handouts

How you can use it:

- Plan staff meetings
- Design workshops
- Use with ECE students

Who it's for:

- Center directors
- Staff development specialists
- Teacher educators

➔ Every issue of *NEX* provides training outlines for 5 or 6 *TYC* articles. Use the following free sample to build on the content in “Playdough: What’s Standard about It?” (pages 8–12 in the February/March 2010 issue of *TYC*).

Playdough: What’s Standard about It? (pages 8–12)

naeyc 2, 3, 4

This article describes how playdough can provide valuable hands-on, active learning experiences and support children’s growth and learning in eight specific domains.

Notes: Prior to the session,

1. Read the *Young Children* article “Playdough: What’s Standard about It,” by Mallary I. Swartz. The article is available online at naeyc.org/tyc. Encourage participants to read it too; make copies as needed.
2. Make one copy per participant of your local or state early learning standards.

Key points to reinforce during staff development sessions:

- ➔ Typical preschool classroom activities, such as using playdough, can address early learning standards in a developmentally appropriate way.
- ➔ The role of the adult at the playdough table is to observe, ask questions, comment on what children are doing, and encourage them to make connections between their play and the larger world they live in.
- ➔ The playdough table is a natural place for teachers to support dual language learners as they talk and play with their peers.

Let’s Talk

1. What do you remember about using playdough, clay, or other modeling materials as a child? What sorts of objects did you create? How did you describe or use the things you made?
2. How is using kitchen tools to cook a meal similar to using playdough when you were a child? How is it different? Do you enjoy cooking and creating new dishes? What skills have you developed while working in the kitchen (measuring; motor skills, like slicing and chopping; new vocabulary, such as *poaching*)? What are your favorite recipes? Why? Are there recipes you avoid? Why?

Playdough: What's Standard about It? (cont'd)

For Further Thinking

- 1. Review and discuss.** Introduce the local or state early learning standards. Explain the format, organization, and content of the document. Allow time for participants to review the document for themselves.
Have participants form small groups. Assign one domain to each group. Ask the group to review and discuss the domain and prepare to present it to the full group. Reconvene the full group and have each small group present its assigned domain.
Lead the full group in listing typical preschool activities (for example, doing puzzles, riding tricycles, playing house) that could serve as opportunities to address early learning standards.
- 2. Plan for learning.** Have participants continue to work in the same small groups. Provide chart paper and markers for each group. Assign to each group one of the typical preschool activities from the list generated by the full group. Have the groups brainstorm ways to introduce and provide activities and ways to assess children's skills. They should refer to the early learning standards and identify which ones could be addressed through their assigned activity.
Ask the groups to list on chart paper suggested props, tools, materials, books, and other items that could help children, including dual language learners, meet early learning standards while doing the activity.
- 3. Share and learn.** Reconvene the large group and have each small group summarize its discussion and list of suggestions for using the activity to address early learning standards. Also include additional ideas provided by the large group.

In the Classroom

- 1. Implement and document.** Encourage participants to try out some of the ideas developed during the session in their classrooms. Suggest that participants spend time observing and taking notes about what the children say and do, what learning standards are addressed, and how children and teachers respond to comments, questions, and suggestions. If possible, participants can take photographs to enhance their documentation.
- 2. Involve families.** Remind participants to make copies of the Message in a Backpack and playdough recipe to share with families. Have them keep track of parents' reports of how they provided playdough experiences for their children at home and what the children did and learned.
- 3. Follow up.** At the next session, ask participants to share and discuss their documentation of what took place when they tried out some of the ideas for addressing learning standards through typical classroom activities. They can also report on their use of the Message in a Backpack.

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