

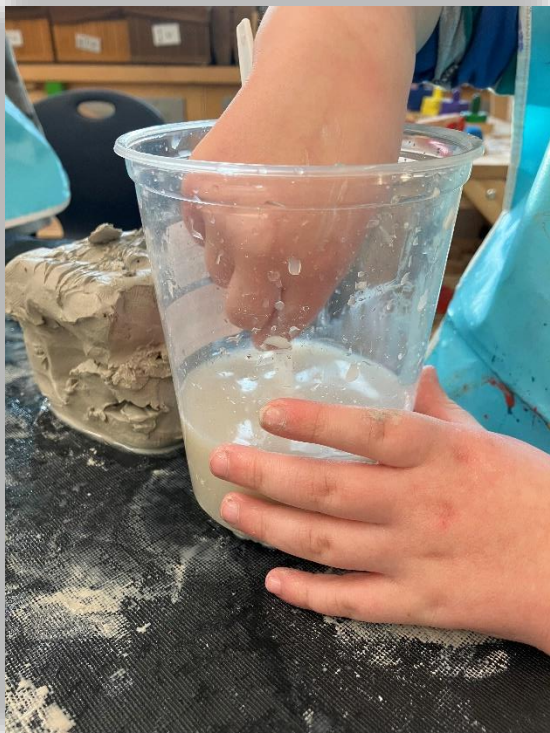
Working with clay

By Mirela Popescu

We invited children to explore the possibilities of clay for some time now. Children became familiar with the medium and for them, the clay took on several meanings as they slabbed, squished, pinched, beat, or hammered to it for their satisfaction.

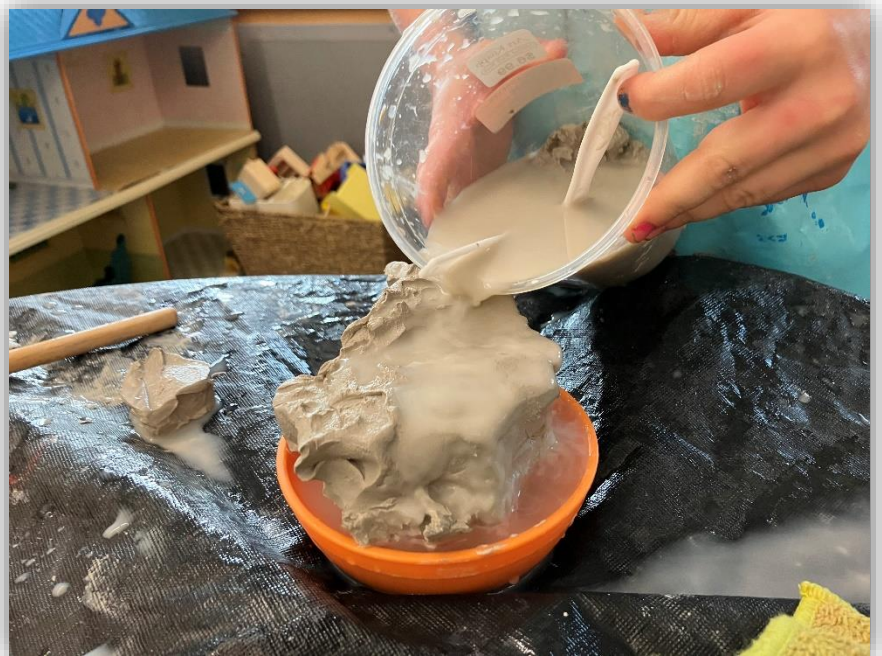
Playing with clay is not only fun but its tactile contact makes one idea spark another one. In playing with clay, children explored multiple concepts by creating shapes and forms of clay, wondering with mass and consistency as well as transformation questions.

"I know how to make cement: water and clay when it dries it is hard like cement. But if you soak the clay it will turn into a better clay."



"How nice and how dirty it is. Mixing it with a bit of water is all gone, it disappears."

As clay is tangible and malleable, creating with clay is a physical, sensorial and mental experience at the same time.



Children described the feelings when engaged with the clay:

"It is smooth and cold, and it feels like ice-cream, milk shake, slurpy, bobba tea...."

"It looks like milk or juice. I wonder if it tastes like dirt."

"It is slippery, and it makes me feel weird because it is also sticky, and it sticks to me."



Squishing a wet ball of clay has an instant tactile gratification.

Have you ever tried it? What are your earliest memories of playing with dirt, mud or clay? Where were you? Who were you with?

We connected this moment with the BC Early Learning Framework by focusing on the *Engagement with Well-being and Belonging Living inquiry*. "Play is the avenue for these vibrant engagements that is the basis of all learning." (BC Early Learning Framework, p. 75).

Pathway: Joy in relationships with people, places, materials, and ideas

We used the Critically Reflective Questions as provocations for our dialogue:

- What knowledge did the children bring into their play?
- In what ways the relationship in between clay and children supports the emotional- social well-being of the child?
- These moments were not about making, these moments were

about being present and seeing what clay can do for us, so we wonder further on how might we provide opportunities to extend or build on these joyful encounters?

Stay tuned for more...