



Short Activity
Ages 0–5
5–15 minutes

Playdough Fossils

Description

Use small toys to make imprints in playdough to create imitation fossils

Number of Participants

For any number of participants

Space Considerations

An indoor space

Competencies

- Classification skills
- Development of fine motor skills
- Study of nature
- Understanding and appreciation of animals

Materials

- Playdough in various colours
- Small toys and objects (dinosaurs, insects, shells, pinecones, etc.). Ensure objects are large enough to not be a choking hazard for young kids
- Playdough rollers (optional)

Implementation

In this program, very young participants or staff use toys or objects to create imprints in playdough to mimic fossils. There are a number of ways you can choose to run this activity:

1. Participant-led:
 - a) Distribute playdough to each participant and caregiver. They should squash a piece of playdough flat, or use a roller.



- b) Participants can select a toy or object and press it down into the playdough and remove the object to reveal their fossil



- c) Participants can repeat the process by using a new piece of playdough, or manipulating the same piece of playdough to remove the imprint (rolling and squashing it flat again)

2. Staff-led:

- a) Create several imprints from objects in playdough before the program, and then line up the objects for participants to see. Participants attempt to match each object with the correct imprint
- b) Alternatively, you can simply show children one imprint at a time (without the objects in view) and have them guess what object made the imprint

3. Passive programming at the library:

- a) Set up an activity station where kids can play freely with the playdough and objects to create their own imprints. You may need to incorporate signage with simple instructions and rules for the playdough

Accessibility Considerations

- Offer toys and objects in a variety of sizes
- Assist participants with rolling or manipulating the playdough as needed
- Allow participants to work in pairs or small teams as needed to create the fossils

Book Suggestions

The Bug Girl (A True Story) by Sophia Spencer, Margaret McNamara, and Kerascoët

The Fossil Whisperer: How Wendy Sloboda Discovered a Dinosaur by Helaine Becker and Sandra Dumais

Whose Bones Are Those? by Chihiro Takeuchi

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