



SpeakEasy Sandbox #29: Pumpkin Pie Playdough

Pre-verbal

Activity: Show your child each ingredient, one at a time, as you pour them into your pot. "Look! Flour!" It's good to model pointing to each one, however your child may not yet follow your point to the item at this stage. If they do not, hold each ingredient up close as you name it. Once you have their attention, move the ingredient around the counter and see if they follow. "Flour, where are you?" "Oh, behind the pot!"

Vocalizer

Activity: Give your child the special kitchen job of mixer. Hand them a wooden spoon and each time you put an ingredient in, "mix mix mix!" You could even put it into a song: "Mix mix mix, mix mix mix, that's the way we mix the dough." Though you wouldn't expect your child to imitate the whole word yet, "m" words are good ones to model since this is an easy sound for children to make.

First words

Activity: Make measuring and stirring ingredients into a verbal routine for your child to follow. "Here's the flour. The flour goes iiiiin." "Stir, stir, stir aaaaand STOP!" Repeat the same words with each ingredient. Pause before you get to "STOP," look at your child, and wait to see if they will try to fill in the word.

Word combiner

Activity: Practice following directions while cooking your pumpkin dough together. Measure out the ingredients and put two at a time in front of your child, making sure you label them as you do so they are familiar with the words (e.g. flour and salt). Start simple: "dump in the flour!". Progress to two steps: "Put in the flour and then put in the salt." If your child is doing well with this, you could add quantities, too ("put in 3 scoops of salt...1, 2, 3").

Full sentences

Activity: Write out your recipe together. On a large blank paper, list your ingredients. Show your child the actual ingredient and then the word, and ask them to draw pictures for each one to help with the list. Exposure to text helps children learn what words are, even before they are ready to read or write. After you finish making your dough, your child may want to write or draw their own recipes. Go for it!

The SpeakEasy Sandbox is a newsletter that provides the necessary tools to boost your child's language and feeding development through play. Sign up at www.speakeasycommunity.com.