

### Play Dough Master Chefs

Once preschoolers grasp the concept of the 5 different food groups and the different types of foods that belong in each, they can begin learning about recommended portions and balanced meals. MyPlate is a great way to teach this concept. And, as any preschooler will tell you, anything involving play dough is just plain fun!

#### Materials:

- Play dough (homemade or store-bought) in different colors
- Plastic knives, rolling pin and other tools for making play food
- Printouts of [MyPlate templates](#) (laminated, if possible)

#### Instructions:

Print out the [MyPlate Poster](#) and decorate each category with a picture (e.g., a fish and chicken drumstick in the Protein section; pasta noodles and bread in the Grains section). Hang this up on a bulletin board or wall to use as reference.

Demonstrate how to make a few pieces of food using play dough. Make these as basic as possible, but add some distinguishing features and teach kids how to do the same. Show how to use different techniques:

- pasta: make a long skinny noodle shape by rolling it against the table; the more you roll, the longer and skinnier it gets!
- grapes: roll small pieces of play dough in your hands to form small marble shapes
- orange: roll a big piece of play dough in your hands to form a large ball
- bread slice: roll out a sheet of play dough with a rolling pin and cut into rectangles; even better, trace around a cold piece of toast!
- shrimp: take a blob of play dough and form it into a C shape, pinch one end to form a two-pronged tail
- carrots: take a small blob of play dough and roll in your hands

Encourage kids to use different colors and to aim for a rainbow of fruits and vegetables on their plates. When the children have made a complete plate of food, declare them Master Chefs! Take a photograph to display on a bulletin board or make a poster of all the MyPlate meals and have kids dictate descriptions of their creations.