

# Mud Bricks

## Best for Ages

3+

## Workspace

Outside

## Is electricity required?

No

## Description

Playing with mud is a great sensory experience for kids. Mud bricks is a fun way to build with mud.

## Materials

- Water
- Dirt
- Bowl or container
- Spoon
- Ice cube trays/silicone ice molds, cupcake wrappers, small plastic cups, plastic bowls
- Grass, sand, pebbles, flower petals, leaves, twigs, other natural items
- Optional materials: spoons, garden hand tools, small toys to enhance play, gloves, sticks, rocks

## Concepts Explored

- Physical Changes
- Fine Motor Skills
- Sensory Play

## What to Do

1. Scoop some dirt into a bowl. Slowly add water while stirring with a spoon. Continue adding dirt and/or water until the mud reaches the desired consistency.
2. Mix in grass clippings, leaves, twigs, or other natural materials. Make several combinations and see which combination makes better bricks. Is there a combination that does not hold together as well? What happens if you only use mud?
3. Use your hand or another tool to place mud in the ice trays. Pack the mud in to get rid of air bubbles.
4. After you have filled your trays, flip the tray upside down and twist the ice tray. If you are using silicone molds, you can push on the back side of the mold to help it come out.
5. Time to let your creative juices flow! Use the bricks to build structures, bridges, houses, forts or whatever you can imagine.



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## Troubleshooting Tips

- Some learners may not want to make mud or bricks. They may want to just explore the materials their own way. Follow your learner's play cues and have fun!
- You can use a plastic tablecloth or trash bag to protect surfaces if you do this activity inside.
- If your mud brick starts to dry out, simply sprinkle a little water on the brick.



How does the mud feel?  
How does the mud smell?

What mud combination made the strongest bricks?

How does the mud change when you add grass? Or sand?

## What is Happening?

- This activity helps to develop **fine motor skills** which is the coordination of small muscles in your wrist and hands. These small muscles are the same muscles we use for writing and drawing. Early learners are developing fine motor skills as they grasp and manipulate the spoon, tray and mud bricks.
- While creating mud bricks you are exploring **physical changes**. As you create mud by adding water to dirt, you are turning a solid into a liquid or semi-liquid, if you allow the brick to dry out in the sun, the brick becomes a solid.
- **Sensory play** is an activity that stimulates your senses such as touch and smell. It builds nerve connections in the brain and supports language development.

## Taking it Forward

- **Connecting this activity to the real world:**
  - Take a look around your house or yard. Do you see examples of bricks used there? How do those bricks feel? What happens to your bricks if you let the sun dry them? How do they feel now? Is it different than they felt when they were wet?
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  - Mud Painting