

## Preschool Themes Newsletter – February 2019

Hello Everyone,

I trust that you have all survived January and the start of the new school year and are well settled now.

It's been very hot over the past month which adds its own challenges to the preschool day and if any of you are like me I really struggle in the heat with feeling so hot and bothered. My energy levels certainly wane towards the end of the school morning never mind by the end of the day. I am always conscious of this when teaching as most of the time the children are feeling the same. I often alter my day to accommodate the heat of the day and save relaxing less intense activities for later in the morning. I also make use of the shaded covered patio areas and put out activities there for outdoor play time so the children don't have to be in the sun at playtime. And don't forget sunhats too.

It's also really important to keep yourself and the children well hydrated. I have a personal theory that irritable and cranky kids are thirsty children. They just don't know it and if you offer them a drink they will often drink a cup or two of water and be more settled. On the topic of water does your classroom or school have drinking fountains? The kind that shoots a spray of water out when the child holds down the knob? If you do, have you ever observed a child especially a younger child, trying to drink from the fountain of water. Many can't press the knob down to start with and if they can they get very little water in their mouths so drink way too little. My preference is for each child to have a water bottle in the classroom available at all times for the children to use and to have set times in the day when you stop for all the children to have a good long drink. They say you are already dehydrated by the time you are thirsty! Below is an interesting article elaborating on the above points.

February has Valentine's Day so make use of the day with a theme on Colour Red. I have included some Valentine's Day activities at the end of the newsletter for you to enjoy. These are not my own ideas and I have included the link to the activity for your information. Please visit my Pinterest board for more ideas.

<https://www.pinterest.nz/kstedall/valentines-school/>



### Dehydration and its impact on learning

**Only 15% of kids are getting enough water throughout their day, Dehydration can lead to fatigue, dizziness, and poor concentration and reduced cognitive abilities, affecting our kids' ability to learn.**

By Stephanie Hoaglund, Patch Poster | Jul 23, 2012 7:58 pm ET | Updated Jul 23, 2012 11:44 pm ET

A recent CNN [article](#) highlights that **most parents assume their kids are getting enough water throughout the day, especially during the school year** when many attend brick and mortar schools. According to a National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey by the CDC, **only fifteen percent of kids are getting enough H2O during the day and many experts consider this to be a problem needing national attention.**

The best way to treat dehydration is prevention. Kids should drink the recommended 6-8 glasses spread throughout the day **with at least 3-4 of them consumed during traditional school hours.** Remember that by the time a child feels thirsty; their mental performance may have deteriorated by 10 percent, so they need to be encouraged to drink often, even if they don't feel like it!

Water makes up about 80 percent of the brain and is essential in neurological transmissions. Poor hydration affects mental performance and learning ability by reducing the brain's ability to transmit and receive information. Studies show that once thirst is felt, mental performance including memory, attention and concentration decreases by as much as 10 percent. Increased dehydration will cause even greater loss of mental performance.

According to [Philippa Norman M.D.](#), even mild dehydration impacts learning and cognitive performance.

"Water is essential for optimal brain health and function. Water is necessary to maintain the tone of membranes for normal neurotransmission. It enhances circulation and aids in removing wastes. Water keeps the brain from overheating, which can cause cognitive decline and even damage. This is one of the main reasons to encourage students to drink water during exercise. Dehydration most commonly occurs because children go long periods of time without drinking water. When they are thirsty they often choose sweetened drinks instead of water. By the time thirst is felt, there may be a loss of body weight up to 2 percent from water loss, and a 10 percent cognitive decline may be present. Dehydration can lead to fatigue, dizziness, poor concentration and reduced cognitive abilities.

Even mild dehydration can affect your child's performance and make him or her lethargic and irritable. Left untreated, severe dehydration can increase the risk of other heat-related illnesses, including heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

Encourage your child to pay attention to early signs and symptoms of dehydration, including:

- Dry or sticky mouth
- Thirst
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Cramps
- Excessive fatigue

Our kids look up to us and mimic what they see. If we all commit to upping our own water intake and drinking the recommended daily glasses of water, we can lead by example. We can also learn what the local school policies are towards water breaks and how they encourage our kids to stay hydrated.

By doing our part, we are setting our kids up on the right path to having their health and learning needs met and providing a successful healthy learning environment. A win/win situation!

## Creative activities

### Circles with pastels

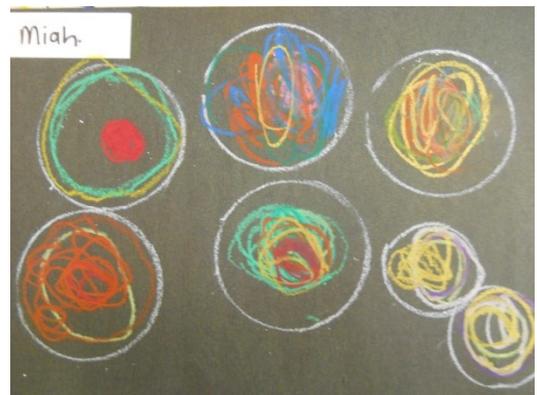
**Themes:** Shapes- circle, space, night skies,

**Ages:** 3 ½ y - 5 year olds

**Skills:** Small and large muscles, eye hand co-ordination

**Materials:**

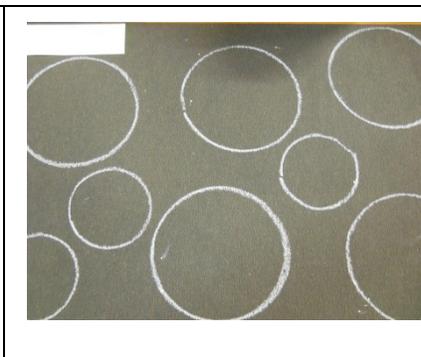
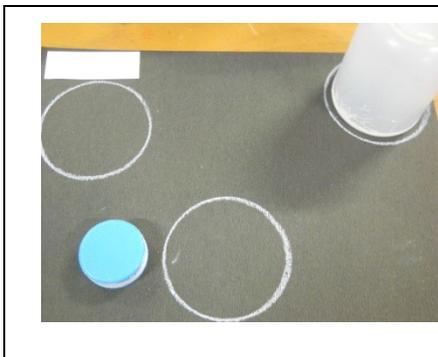
- Paper – black is effective
- Pastels or wax crayons
- Items to trace ( cup, milk lid, lids) and a white crayon if using black paper



**Method:**

**Teacher:** Trace a variety of different size of circles on a page

**Child:** The child colours and traces the circle shapes to fill the circles.





**Notes:**

- Pastels work better than wax crayons
- Encourage the children to trace around the inside of the circles
- If using black paper white sticky labels are excellent for writing the children's names on the art work.



**Shape monsters**

**Themes:** Shapes, Valentine's Day

**Ages:** 4 - 5 year olds

**Skills:** Small and large muscles, eye hand co-ordination

**Materials:**

- Paper
- Shapes – big and small for a variety and some strips for arms and legs
- Coloured card shapes for the body
- Glue and glue brushes
- Googly eyes



**Method:**

**Teacher:** Prepare the shapes including larger shapes for the body

**Child:** The child selects a body shape and pastes this to the paper. The child adds face and body features. Remind the child to place the glue on the shape and not the background paper. Googly eyes can be added or supply koki pens to draw the eyes (I used sticky backed eyes for this lesson)





**Notes:**

- Some children didn't really create a 'person' but enjoyed using the shapes
- Remind the children to glue the shape and not the paper
- Encourage the children to plan their monsters before pasting
- Name your monster
- The child can tell a story about their monster in mat time or give it a personality e.g. a name, age, likes and dislikes, favourite colour etc



**Drawing my family and making a play dough house**

I did not get many pictures for this activity. To keep all the family pictures safe while we made the house from playdough I gave each child a plate to store their drawings.

**Theme:** My family, My home

**Ages:** 4 - 5 year olds

**Skills:** Small and large muscles, eye hand co-ordination

**Materials:**

- Small pieces of paper
- Crayons or koki pens
- Scissors
- Playdough
- Cardboard or heavy paper



**Method:**

**Teacher:** Prepare small pieces of paper and playdough

**Child:** The child draws pictures of their family members on the small pieces of paper and cuts them out. The child rolls the playdough into sausages and creates a house on the cardboard. The family members are placed onto the playdough house



## Notes:

- Some of the children 'scribbled' the family members which is fine
- No playdough – draw a house and paste the family to the paper

## Upside down table painting

I saw this activity on Pinterest and liked the concept. So when I picked up a roll of paper like stuff that is used in house building from a nearby construction site tip (you will be surprised to see how much useful stuff you can find in a building site tip!) I knew it would be perfect for the idea I had seen. Sorry I don't know the name of the paper – it's used to protect wood when building, but any roll of paper, fabric or interfacing could work. It's also a good idea to look at the builder's warehouse for frost cloth or something similar that is cheap and can be bought by the metre. The most challenging part of this activity is getting the paper tight enough around the table legs. I used a staple gun and secured the paper to the wooden legs of the table. The Pinterest activity used a big roll of catering glad wrap but I wondered if it would be tight enough to stay firm when being painted on. It's best to put the upside down table on a larger table so there is space for the paint pots. Using flat chairs on tables could be tried too.



**Theme:** My home, Opposites

**Ages:** 3 - 5 year olds

**Skills:** Small and large muscles, eye hand co-ordination,

## Materials:

- White paper on a roll or something similar (see notes above)
- Paint
- Staple gun

## Method:

**Teacher:** Place a table on top of another table upside down. Secure the paper around the legs of the table.

**Child:** The child paints the vertical paper. Several children can paint at the same time. Some of the paint does drip onto the floor so either place this activity outside or protect the ground under the table. This is great for the younger children to experience vertical painting.





### Notes:

- The painted paper can be used for a variety of ideas.
  - Autumn colours can be cut into Autumn shaped leaves for a tree collage
  - Blue and green can be used for a sea background collage
  - Blue and white can be used for a backdrop for the sky – air transport drawings, planets
- Discourage the children from leaning against the paper
- There was plenty of chatter amongst the children while they painted.

### Group plastic golf ball painting

I was given a whole lot of plastic golf balls so I looked on Pinterest and found this perfect activity. This is a group version of golf ball painting. Instead of each child rolling their golf ball in this activity a group of children flick the plastic golf balls around in a rimmed tray. It's really important that you use **plastic** golf balls and not real golf balls as the balls often flick out of the container and could hurt a child. The children need to know that they will be sent away if they are silly with the teaspoons and balls. I used a plastic box to collect up the balls to recharge them with paint. The dried art work can be cut into shapes such as butterflies or flowers. The rimmed plastic tray looks white but it was just dirty.



### Theme: Balls

**Other themes:** Sports

**Ages:** 3 - 5 year olds

**Skills:** Small and large muscles, eye hand co-ordination

### Materials:

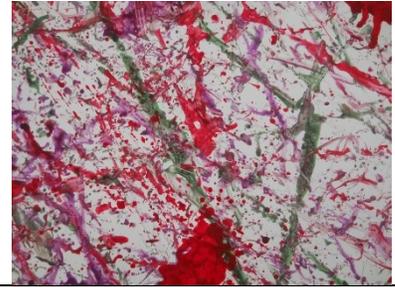
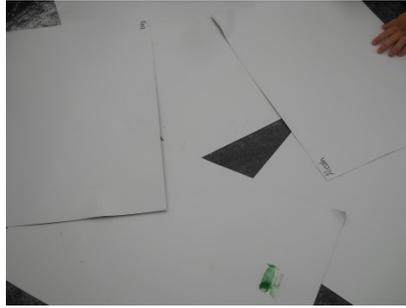
- Paper
- Paint
- Plastic golf balls – about 12
- Plastic spoons – large
- Paint containers - flat



### Method:

**Teacher:** Place several sheets of paper in the rimmed container. Write the children's names on the paper even though this is a group effort. Throughout the activity collect up the balls and place them back into the paint before dropping them on the paper for the children to roll/flick around again. The teacher needs to move the paper if they overlap so the whole paper gets painted.

**Children:** Several children stand around the plastic container each with a large plastic spoon. The teacher drops paint covered plastic golf balls onto the papers. The children flick the balls around the container while covering the paper in paint.



At the end of the time I tipped the paint onto the paper and the children rolled the balls through the paint. It's a bit messier but was still effective.



**Notes:**

- The children love this activity so have plenty of paper handy
- It's best for the teacher to dispense the golf balls
- The balls must be plastic as they pop off the tray from time to time
- This is a messy activity so try and put it outdoors



The above activity can also be done with individual children and boxes and using real golf balls or marbles. The real golf balls are heavier and are more effective but too dangerous for the group activity as the children get quite excited and balls go flying out of the tray.



**Happy teaching**

**Regards  
Karin**

# Valentine's Day activities 2019

		
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