

Pre-school Themes



Planning and preparation made easy

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Newsletter – March 2013

Hello everyone,

I hope this newsletter finds you all well and enjoying your teaching. By now the children should be well settled and you should have a good idea of who they are and what interests them. We are still enjoying some lovely warm weather so the children have had plenty of water play at school. We enjoyed a beach day at school last week with all the children wearing their swimming costumes, playing in the sprinkler and having a barbecue with ice lollies. It won't be long before we are reminding the children to wear shoes and jackets outside instead of hats, so make the most of the good weather. We also have Easter coming up at the end of March so time to start planning ideas and activities so you are well prepared and have all the resources and materials available. There are so many fantastic ideas on my Easter pinterest boards so please take the time to look at the link. Here are just a few examples of the ideas.

Don't forget to link the theme with numeracy and literacy activities and there are several perceptual games and printables for your theme table or storytelling there too.



<http://pinterest.com/kstedall/easter-school/>



I will be posting links to the Easter Pinterest board on the Facebook page for the first two weeks of March. <https://www.facebook.com/preschoolthemes>. My blog, which can be accessed through the web page, has a lovely Easter art activity which makes a pleasing group wall or window display.

If you do any Easter activities I would love to share your photos on the Facebook page.

New theme – Sports and balls

The Sports and balls theme is now available. The book can be ordered from Ilette Strydom. Her contact details are:

Epos: epos@groep7.co.za

Faks: 086 514 1051

Cell: 082 4490 574

The next book;
Air transport
is under construction

Toddler activity book

I have had several requests for a book on activities that work for the 2-3 year olds. I have started with the book which is good news. If you have any special requests for this book or anything you would like me to include in this book please email me. At the present moment the book will have information about toddlers, suitable resources and equipment for toddlers, creative activities, rhymes and songs, perceptual activities,

games and movement and lesson time activities. The book will be in colour with many photographs of the activities being done by the 2-3 year olds who I have tested the activity on at school. Each activity will have ways of extending the activity, what themes it can be used for and helpful notes to ensure the activity is successful. Many of the activities are suitable for the older children too - they just take them to a higher level.

Workbooks to compliment the theme manuals

I have also had several requests for workbooks which are theme related. I am still looking into this concept. To help me decide on this book format I have attached a very short questionnaire with the newsletter.

For each returned and completed questionnaire you will go into a draw to win 3 theme book titles of your choice.

Questionnaires must be returned to me by **Wednesday 6th March** to be entered.

I look forward to your responses

rodandkarin@xtra.co.nz

I personally do not like worksheets but I do understand the need for Grade R children to be exposed to some sort of formal worksheet before entering Grade 1. The activities will be theme related so they are relevant to the child's learning.

Postal service woes!



There are still on-going issues with the poor postal service. If you have not received your books in a reasonable time frame please let either myself or Ilette know. Ilette has reported back that the postal service website to track registered parcels is not always up to date and orders are being lost, getting stuck at postal depots and some are going to the incorrect post offices. I do not have any control over this, but I do feel your frustration over this issue so please let us know if you need us to follow up.

The best option (not the cheapest though) is to courier your book orders to you. Currently if you have ordered 32 or more theme books in one order I offer you free postage. If you opt for a courier service we will deduct R75 from the courier costs. We are looking into other options and an increase in the postage fees is imminent.

On-line educational toy shop

Please have a look at this web site for a great range of toys and educational materials for your schools and for your own children. There are also some lovely gifts for children at very reasonable prices which can all be ordered from the comfort of your home or school.

<http://www.dutoys.co.za/>

The products are arranged by age, brand or price range. The preschool theme books are also available from them.



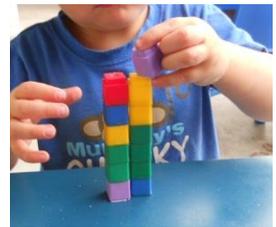
Some ideas and activities for you



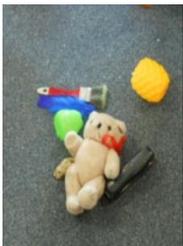
Patterning and measuring using stacking towers

The children sorted the pegs by colour by making colour towers and we looked at which one had the most, the least etc and counted each tower. Then we made patterns using the colours – some did them horizontally and some vertically.

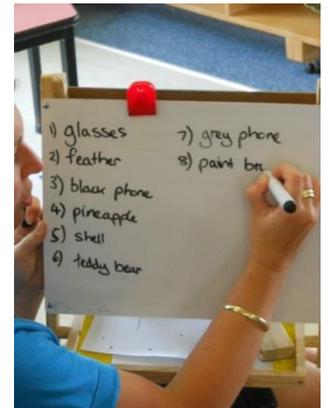
We did a similar activity with touch and count cubes and made shapes and patterns



Memory game (Preschool lots of items, younger children a few)



We set out a variety of items on the carpet for the children to remember (they were laid out nicely!) At first we only set out a few items but the pre-schoolers were too good, so the teacher doing the lesson decided to add more items. Then she could not remember them herself! So she decided to write a list of all the items which was a very good literacy opportunity for the children to see that print represent words and she numbered them so we added in numeracy. We then asked the children to remember the items and covered them up. As they were remembered, she ticked them off the list. Since they could not read the board, the words did not need to be covered. It also helped the children to see how many more items they still needed to remember.



Squash painting using heart shaped paper



Baking and cooking with pre-schoolers

This is an interesting topic as it is received with many different reactions and is presented in many different ways at school. There is no dispute on the value of presenting cooking activities to the children BUT the true value lies in the way the baking activity is presented. You all know that you learn best when you do something yourself instead of just watching an activity so I am not very keen on baking where the teacher adds everything with the occasional child having a turn to measure, stir or pour. For some schools the limited budgets are a big factor and baking cannot be offered to the children on a weekly basis. This is perfectly understandable. I have not had a lot of experience with baking at preschool level either. I have made green cupcakes with the children to celebrate St Patrick's Day. I used a box mix for cupcakes and added green food colouring. As I was working with the 2-3 year olds most of the process was done with them watching and me doing the bulk of the activity. They did help to ice the cupcakes and of course were very pleased with the end result. We have also made crumpets using an electric frying pan.



I was planning on opening a children's baking school last year as baking is one of my other passions so I thought why not combine children and cooking. I tested out several recipes with 4 children for a term and found it really hard to find recipes that could be forgiving for extra handling and didn't bake for too long as we still needed the food to cool so we could ice them-bearing in mind the reduced attention span too. I really enjoyed the lessons and the children were thrilled with their goods, but I decided not to go that route as the health regulations are endless in New Zealand.

Here are some thoughts on preschool cooking and baking;

- You have to be VERY organised and have everything handy and ready. Good rules are needed.
- The recipe needs to be tested ahead of time
- You should do it in smaller groups but that does not seem to happen. They all want to do it at the same time!
- Hygiene is an issue as there is always lots of finger licking.
- It doesn't always have to be baking – you can also make soup, fruit salad, sandwiches and other savoury food.
- Many teachers do not like to encourage children to eat 'junk' food.
- Many ovens cannot accommodate several baking trays.
- Not all baking has to be cooked.
- Ideally the children should be following a recipe written in such a way that they can follow the pictures.

I have a simple cookery book for preschool which I bought at least 30 years ago. It was compiled by a group of teachers and sold as a photocopied book. I have checked and it's no longer in print. It is great as the recipes are made up of the dry mixture and the wet mixture and you give the children a few spoons of dry and add a bit of wet and they each make their own biscuit, scone or cake. I have scanned the pages that are relevant so if any of you would like me to mail them, please let me know. I didn't want to send them to everyone when some people do not do baking with children. (rodandkarin@xtra.co.nz)

I must add that I have never tested any of the recipes so give them a trial run first.

I have created a Pinterest board with cooking ideas for children
<http://pinterest.com/kstedall/preschool-cooking-and-baking-ideas/>
The board is still a work in progress so please visit it often for ideas.

If you have had success baking and cooking at preschool we would love to hear from you.

Rhyme resources

<http://catchthepossibilities.blogspot.com/2013/02/flannel-friday-5-little-nails.html>

<http://melissa.depperfamily.net/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/P1000895.jpg>



These two sites use the same concept for making these two resources. I think it's a really clever idea. Unfortunately due to copyright I cannot put the instructions here but please take the time to look at the links. The rhymes are with the link. Both these resources will really hold the children's attention at the same time as learning to count.



It's a good idea to build up your resources for rhymes and songs.

I leave you with this thought....

It is a miracle that curiosity survives formal education.

[Albert Einstein](#)

Happy teaching
Regards Karin