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Preschool Themes Newsletter – May 2021

Hello Everyone

Welcome back from the short holiday break. I hope some of you were able to get some rest and enjoyed your Easter weekend too. With it being Autumn the weather has cooled considerably and the leaves on many trees have changed into beautiful Autumn colours. There are so many art opportunities for the theme of Autumn with the rich colour combination of orange, red and yellow. I have included several for you in this newsletter that the children loved creating.



Although I retired from preschool teaching last year, I have continued to go in to school on a volunteer basis to do art activities with the pre-schoolers as I love doing art with children. The children have been doing such lovely creations which I have been sharing on the preschool themes Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/preschoolthemes>. Please pop over the Facebook page and give it a like and share activities with your friends and colleagues.

Wishing all the moms a Happy Mother's Day this weekend.

Exciting news

I am excited to announce that I have been writing an art book over the past year for the three- to six-year-olds which is nearing completion and will be printed in the next few months. This book is a collection of over 120 art activities I have done with the children in an authentic setting in the classroom. The book is theme based so it will be useful for those of you who use the preschool theme manuals to supplement the themes and activities. It is also useful for anyone working with children aged 3-6 years olds including Grade R and parents of young children.



Each lesson is detailed and there are 6 colour photos of the process so its super easy to follow the lesson. And of course I have included my tips, hints and suggestions to make the lesson successful for anyone using the book. The book will be for sale through Groep 7 in Pretoria and on the www.preschoolthemes.co.za web site. Watch this space for updates.

Praising children



Imagine this scenario. You are at work and you have worked on a presentation for several hours and perhaps even weeks. You have given up some family time and some social time to complete the presentation. You are pleased with the product. You finally present the presentation to your boss and your colleagues and you are incredibly pleased with the result and how well the presentation and ideas are received. And no one passes any comments or compliments at the end of the meeting. How does this make you feel???? Unappreciated, undervalued, annoyed with yourself for going to so much trouble. I am sure you would feel one or all the feelings. How would you have felt if someone stopped to compliment and thank you for the presentation and more so commenting on how much time and effort you put into the presentation? Valued, important, useful, a good team member, happy to go the extra mile next time. Consider how you respond to things children do in the classroom or show you they have made or created. Do you vaguely look over and say well done? Think about how you respond and the impact this has on a child's self-esteem. Remember children's play is work for them.

Creative activities

I planned to do this chicken activity as part of our theme on farm animals. I found a plastic lid as a template and drew circles for the children to cut out and paste as the chicks. After they were all drawn, I realised I had completely forgotten to allow space for the feathers and wings on either side of the circles. This meant my chickens were too large to have two on an A4 page. I was a bit annoyed with myself and as usual it was late at night so I did not want to redo them. You all know the feeling. So I had to use an A3 paper which is not a real problem but I find it takes up a lot of space on the table. It also left the whole top space open and empty. I decided to add in some clouds that the children used corks and white paint to create to fill the space. The children need some cutting skills to snip around the circle but that part of the activity could be left off for the younger children

Theme: Farm animals Chickens using cardboard circles and feathers

Other themes: Easter, Birds, Chickens and eggs, Shapes - circle

Ages: 4 – 6-year-olds

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

Materials:

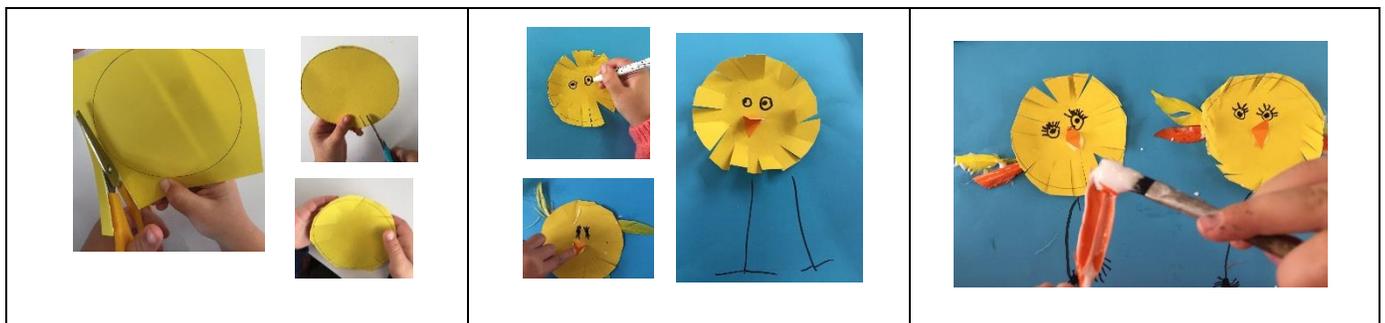
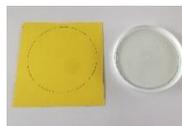
- Yellow, orange and green cardboard
- Circle template – lid or plate
- Scissors
- A3 paper – blue or white
- Glue and glue brushes
- Koki pens – black and other colours
- Feathers – yellow, orange and white – cut into smaller pieces if needed

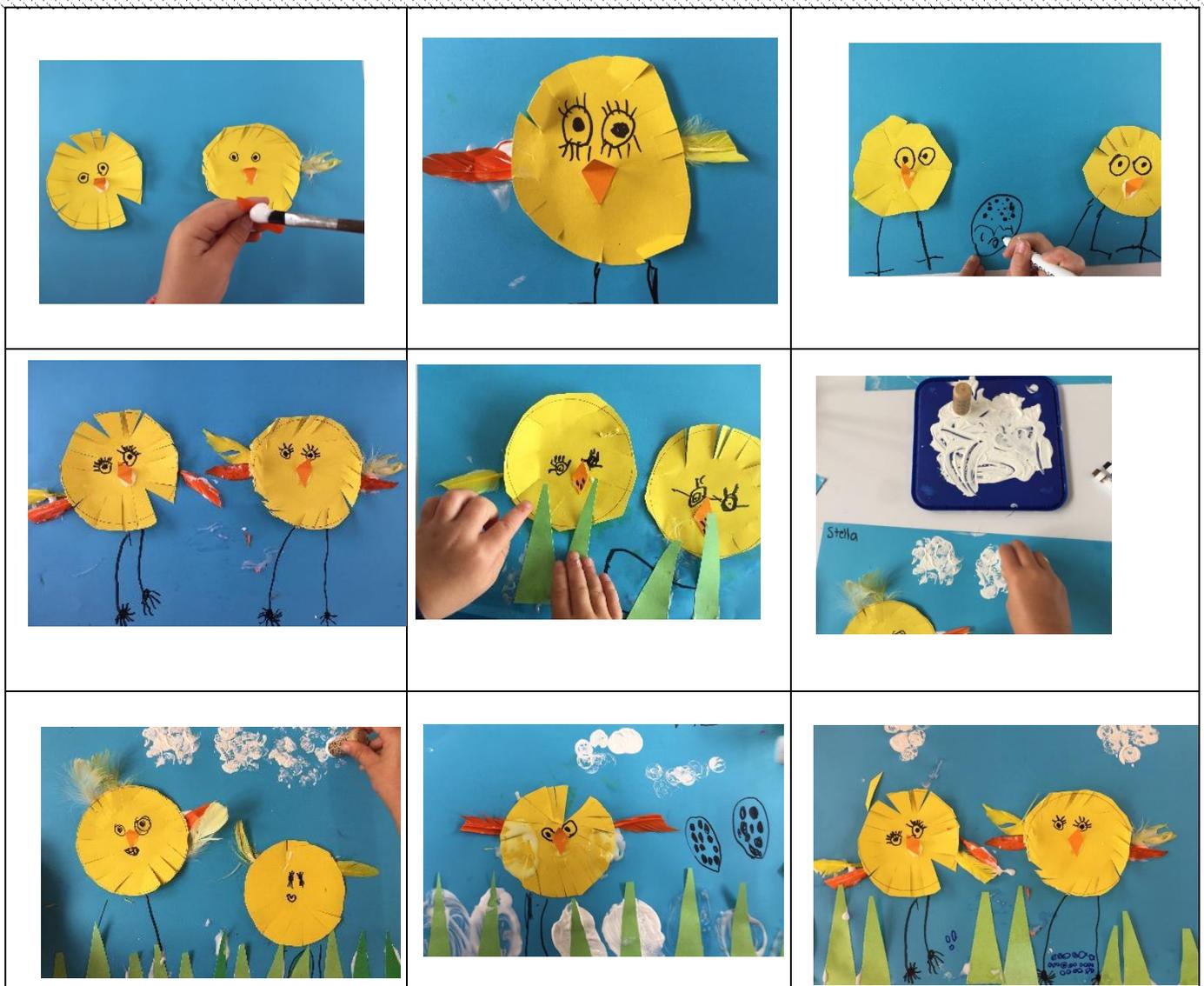
Optional: Corks and white paint on flat lids for printing clouds if using blue paper

Teachers note: Cut triangle beaks from the orange cardboard and small triangles for the grass. Trace 2 yellow circles for each child about 8 – 10 cm diameter.

Method:

The children cut out the two yellow circles and make snips around the edge. The children fold over every other piece around the circle to create some texture to the chicken. The children paste the circles to the background paper leaving space for the wings and the legs. The children add legs and a face with a black Koki pen and paste a beak. The children glue feathers to either side of each chicken. The children paste the green triangles along the base for grass. Eggs can be drawn. Optional: Cork print white clouds.





Notes:

- This activity is only suitable for children who are able to use scissors
- The cutting of the circles does not need to be accurate
- A4 paper can be used but only make one chicken
- Children are unable to trace the circles. Prepare them for the children
- Remind the children to leave space between the circles for feathers and legs when they paste them



Theme: Pets

Rabbits on a painted background with a patterned border

This activity is only suited to the older children as it requires cutting and drawing skills. I really loved the end result of these rainbow rabbits. I did three different activities to make up this picture. The rabbit which is drawn, coloured and cut out, the background which is painted in stripes and the border of cardboard pieces.



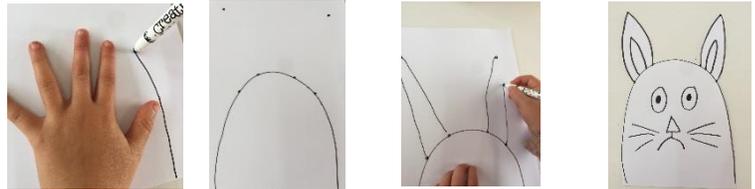
Other themes: Easter, Animals, Ears

Ages: 4 - 6-year-olds

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

Materials:

- A3 paper – preferably coloured
- A4 Paper x 2 – white one for the rabbit and one for the background
- Paint – pastel colours made by using white paint and adding colour
- Paint and paint brushes
- Glue and glue brushes
- Paper – orange cut into strips about 3 cm
- Koki pens – black and pink
- Scissors



Teachers note: Prepare the backgrounds. Paste an A4 white page to the middle of the A3 coloured paper. Cut the orange paper into strips. Trace around the children's hands. Look at the picture for the shape. Place dots for the ears that the children will join. Make pastel paints. **Optional:** Jewel noses and collage to add to the cut squares on the border.

Method:

The children cut the orange paper strips into pieces about 3 cm in length and paste the squares around the white central paper to create a border. The children draw the ears and faces on their rabbits using the black Koki pens adding details with a pink pen. The children cut out their rabbits either in one piece or as the body and ears. The children paint stripes of paint on the white background paper. The children apply glue to the back of the cut-out rabbits and place the rabbit on the painted stripes.



Notes:

- The background can be left out and the rabbits placed on a painted background
- The children do need some cutting skills for this activity but some children may need some teacher help
- Some children chose to colour in their rabbits. This is not necessary for this activity.
- This activity can be adapted for cats instead of rabbits



Theme: Autumn

Leaves painted around the edge in Autumn colours

Other themes: Leaves, Colours, Trees and wood

Ages: 3 - 6-year-olds

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

Materials:

- Autumn leaves – Maple leaves preferably freshly dropped and green
- Paper – A4 white
- Paper – A3 yellow
- Paint – red, yellow and orange
- Paint brushes

Teacher: stapler

Teachers note: Staple a leaf to the white A4 page. Staple the page to the coloured A3 background page. Glue is not effective for pasting leaves to paper. The younger children can paint the leaf and the surrounding area with Autumn colours as following the leaf edge may be too difficult for some of them.

Method:

The children select an Autumn colour and carefully paint around the edge of the leaf following the outline shape of the leaf. The children select a different colour and paint another row of colour close to the previous colour. This is repeated with the third colour. The rows can be repeated until all the paper is painted.



Notes:

- The younger children can paint the leaf and surrounds as they please
- Some children left white spaces between each round of paint
- A coloured background is nice but not essential



Theme: Autumn

Fingerprinted Autumn leaves with a candle drawing and coloured washed background

Other themes: Leaves, Trees and wood, Seasons, Colour red

Ages: 3 - 6-year-olds

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

Materials:

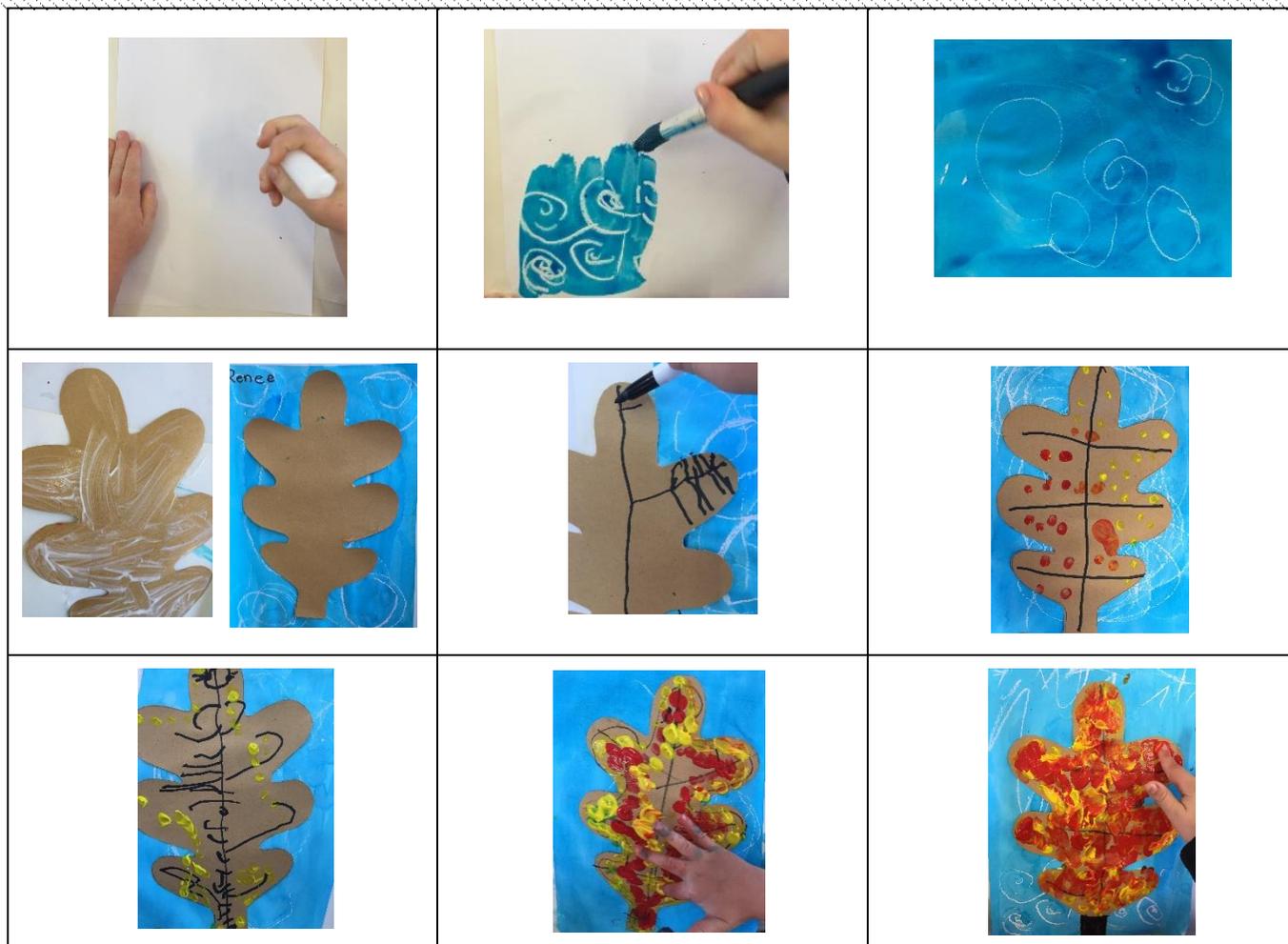
- Paper – A4 white
- Candles or white wax crayons or pastels
- Leaf shape – cardboard and light brown
- Paint – red and yellow on flat lids
- Glue and glue brushes
- Food colouring or school dyes – blue diluted
- Paint brushes
- Black marking pens or black wax crayons



Teachers note: Cut out a leaf shape from cardboard for each child. Test the food colouring over the candle drawing.

Method:

Using the candles, the children draw spirals on the white paper covering the whole paper. The children paint over the candle drawing using the diluted food colouring wiping the brushes and going to the edge of the paper. The children paste the cardboard leaf to the background and draw vein lines using the black pen. The children dip their finger or fingers into the paint and make a fingerprint on the leaf. Suggest the children go around the edge first. Continue printing until the leaf is covered in Autumn coloured paint. The red and yellow will merge to make orange. Discourage the children from smearing the paint and painting with their fingers. It gets very messy!



Notes:

- Keep some paper towels or hand washing water close by
- Printing with two fingers can speed up the process
- Any drawing for the background is acceptable
- Encourage the children to press firmly with the candle drawing



At the end of the lesson I left the extra materials on the table and some of the younger children used the materials for some process art. Although this became a bit messy the children enjoyed the activity.



Theme: Autumn

Autumn trees with fingerprinted leaves

Other themes: Trees and wood, Seasons

Ages: 3 - 6-year-olds

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

Materials:

- Paper – A4 white
- Brown paper – cut into tree trunks and branches
- Glue and glue brushes
- Paint – red, yellow and orange on flat lids
- Scissors

Teachers note: Cut the brown paper into pieces for the tree trunk and the branches.

Method:

The children create a tree using the brown paper tree trunk and the smaller pieces for the branches. The children can cut the pieces smaller if necessary. The tree trunk should be pasted to the bottom of the paper. Once the tree is complete, the children dip their fingertips in the paint and print Autumn coloured leaves on the tree branches and on the ground. Discourage the children from printing leaves on the tree trunk.



Notes:

- Some children used a lot of glue. It is tricky to only get the glue on the branches

This child wanted to go and play. I said his leaves were not complete and he replied that the branches are bare as all the leaves have already fallen off!



Theme: Autumn

Autumn trees with squash painted leaves

Other themes: Seasons, Trees and wood, Colours, Gardens, Leaves

Ages: 3 - 6-year-olds

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

Materials:

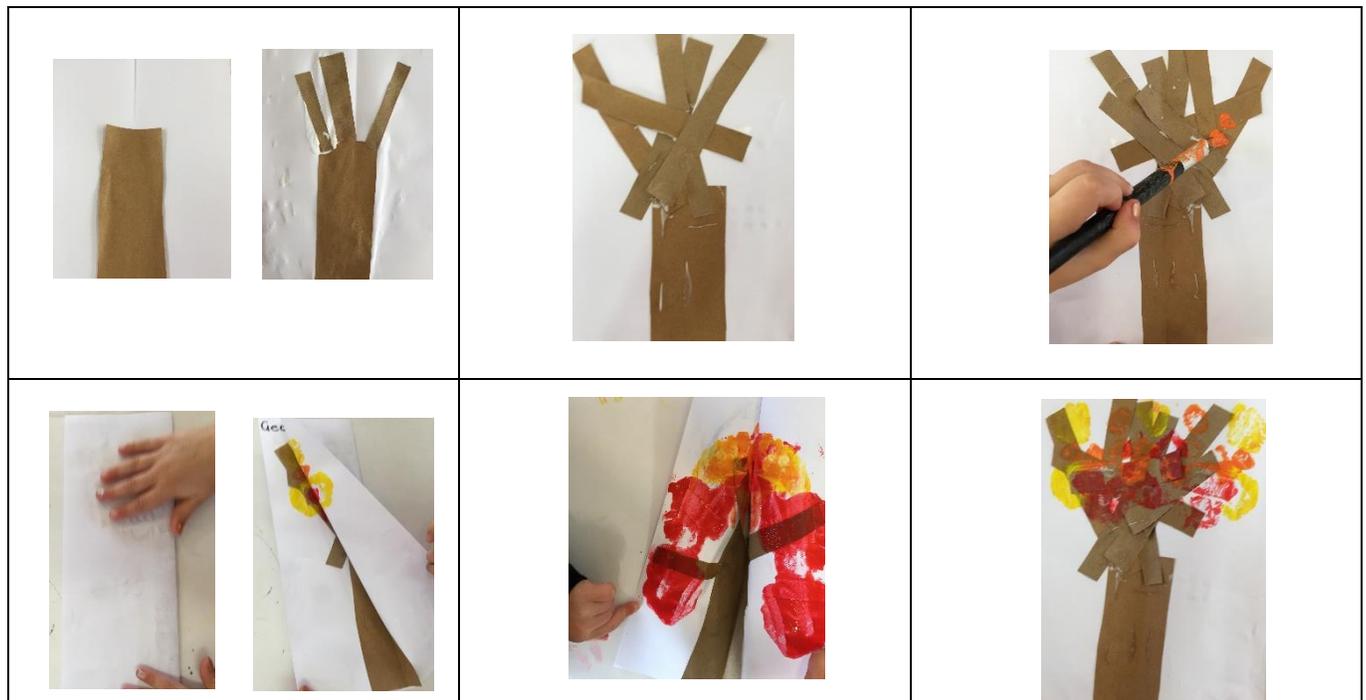
- Brown paper – cut into tree trunks and branches
- Glue and glue brushes
- Paint – red, yellow and orange
- Paint brushes
- Scissors
- Paper – A4 white folded vertically



Teachers note: Fold the A4 paper vertically. Cut the brown paper into pieces for the tree trunk and the branches.

Method:

The children create a tree using the brown paper tree trunk and the smaller pieces for the branches. The children can cut the pieces smaller if necessary. The tree trunk should be pasted to the bottom of the paper and over the fold. Once the tree is complete the teacher refolds the paper. The children paint blobs of paint on one side of the paper and on the branches. The children fold the paper closed and rub gently to 'squash' the paint together to create the Autumn leaves. The children open the page to reveal the squash painted leaves.



Notes:

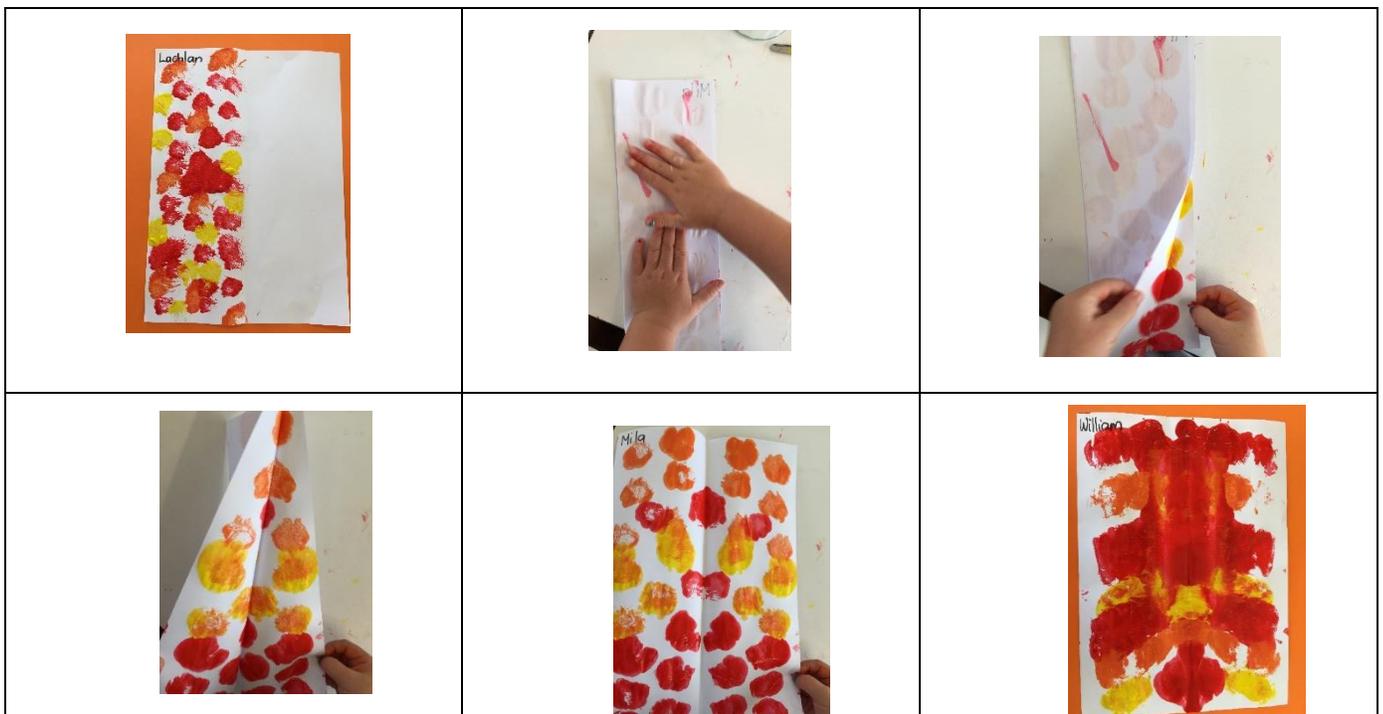
- Some children put paint on both sides of the paper before folding it. It still works effectively
- Some children did not put sufficient paint on the branches so the colours could not blend
- The younger children may struggle to create a tree. Allow them to collage the brown paper as they please



While we had the Autumn colours out for painting the children did some Autumn coloured handprints. I often leave the materials on the table after an activity for the children to use freely.



Some children chose to continue making Autumn squash pictures. Leaves can be cut from the paper once dry and displayed as a group tree.



Happy teaching

Regards

Karin