

## Preschool Themes Newsletter – May 2014

Hello Everyone,

Wow what a lot of long weekends in April. They are great to refresh the mind and body and spend some time with family. I had a month off school with all my children and grandchildren visiting which was a good change. No doubt you are all feeling the approaching winter and I am certainly not looking forward to the cold and dark of winter. The trees are all turning to beautiful autumn colours so now is a great time to do a theme on autumn. I have put some autumn ideas up on the preschool themes blog and of course once again the Pinterest board has a good selection of ideas and activities to supplement your theme books and planning.



<http://www.pinterest.com/kstedall/autumn/>

And let's not forget that May 11<sup>th</sup> is Mother's day so I have included some ideas for you to use in this newsletter.

<http://www.pinterest.com/kstedall/mothers-day-ideas/>

### Some creative activities

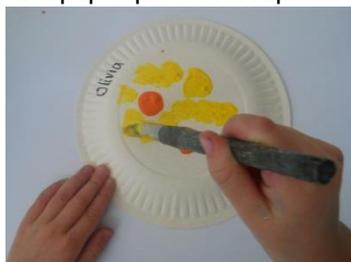
#### Paper plate painting and printing using autumn colours

I find it fun to use a painting process to create autumn coloured paintings that can be cut into leaf shapes and used on an autumn tree or as part of your autumn classroom. Unfortunately we had run out of red paint (happens to us all!) but I would have preferred to have used red and yellow paint to create orange, but I still think the mixture of colours we did use looked nice together.

**For this activity you need:** Paper plates – large or small work well, some paint and paper. The children painted **blobs** of paint on the **underside of the paper plate and only in the "plate" section – not the edge** although several children did paint the edges which doesn't affect the end product it just makes it a bit more messy. Some children really struggled to keep the paint as blobs and wanted to paint the whole plate. The end effect was okay but it sort of missed the point of swirling the colours together to create a new colour.



Once the paper plate was painted the children turned the plate over onto some paper and used the flat of their hand to turn the plate around and create a print. They lifted the paper plate and repeated the process.



## Extension

- You can cut autumn leaves from the dried paintings. Or the older children can cut the leaf outlines you have traced for them.
- I displayed the paintings with the paper plate stapled to the page
- The coloured paper can be torn into smaller pieces and used to collage a leaf shape.
- Use the paper as a background to paste real autumn leaves to.
- This activity makes a great sun for the summer theme and also planets for the Space theme using different colours.



## Painting with sticks and glue using autumn colours



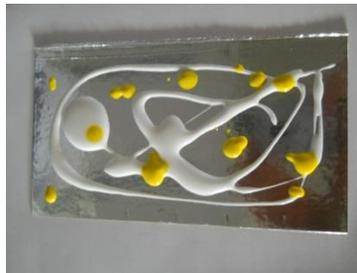
I saw this idea on Pinterest so I thought I would give it a try.

You need some firm cardboard for the base to carry the weight of the paint and glue. I think a paper plate would work perfectly although I did mine on some shiny cardboard we had been given at school. Don't try and cover some card with foil as the stick will tear the foil.

**You will need:** firm card, white glue, paint in two colours and sticks to draw with. I used sosatie sticks but matchsticks or toothpicks will work too and sticks from trees. I think this would be very effective on cardboard leaf shapes.

## Process

The children dribbled glue onto the cardboard. I diluted the white glue until it was just thin enough to dribble but not too thin that it runs off the cardboard. The children then dribbled or blobbed paint onto the glue. Using the stick (the end which was not pointed worked better), the children dragged the paint through the glue and mixed the colours. Some preferred to use the side of the stick to mix the colours (see picture 6)



## Notes:

- I think this activity is better suited to the older children
- Make sure the paint and glue are thin enough to dribble
- Spoons can replace paint brushes – this prevents them 'painting' instead of dribbling the paint
- Not many of the end products had the feathered effect but it was a good sensory activity
- I threw the sticks into the bin and several children took them out and wanted to play with them. With the sharp edge it is not safe so dispose of the sticks so the children can't rescue them from the bin.
- Smaller paper is more effective.

**Pencil grips** – a good opportunity to note which child is still using a fist grip and who has moved to a pencil grip.



## Painting with marbles in yogurt containers

I usually do marble painting in flat containers but for a bit of variety I used 1 litre yogurt containers.

**You will need:** 1 litre yogurt containers with lids, paint – 2 colours that mix to make a new colour, spoons, marbles and paper cut to fit into the yogurt containers.

### Process

The children placed the paper into the yogurt containers against the side of the container, used the spoons to drop marbles covered in paint (two colours) into the container, **secured the lid** and then shook the container. The paint on the marbles paints the paper.



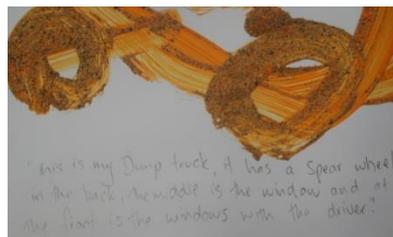
### Notes

- **Make sure the lids are tightly closed or you will have marbles flying everywhere** and it can be dangerous. You may need to help the older children to close the lids securely - show them how to use two hands and to listen for the click when it is tightly closed.
- For the younger children I use plastic golf balls instead of marbles and I secured the lids for them.
- Have enough marbles and be aware of children who put all the marbles in their yogurt container leaving none for the others.
- Use the coloured paper for autumn leaves or cut the paper into leaf shapes which will fit into the yogurt containers and paint them.

## A teachable moment



We have had some serious road building going on next to school. As part of the process our school had to change the driveway. Because of this we had a good variety of road construction machines on the school premises. During the tea break the road construction workers offered to park the digger close to school so the children could climb in and pretend to drive. This sparked much conversation and interest in road construction vehicles and the children were encouraged to paint some of the vehicles. To extend the activity the children were asked to explain their picture and the teacher wrote what the children said. This is emergent literacy and the children see that the letters and writing have meaning.



This is my Train, it goes along a track.

## A few other ideas

Making birds using feathers to collage with - the legs are made from pipe cleaners and the bird is folded so it can 'fly'



**Drawing a sea creature using a black koki pen and painting with water colours**



**Cutting skills using play dough.** This works best if you show the children how to roll snakes to cut. The size of the snake is just right for the snipping action of cutting. Just be aware that some children will end up holding the play dough in their dominant hand instead of the scissors and this may lead to some frustration as they are then using the non-dominant hand to cut with. In these pictures you can see the child is using both hands.



## Just a thought on classroom management

We have been having a lot of discipline problems during mat time/ring times/ whole group times. We work in a slightly different way in New Zealand and there are a few teachers sitting with the children on the mat during the whole group times. I made a comment that the position of the chair the teacher was sitting on had the light reflecting behind her and that the children were looking directly into this light. It meant that they could not see the pictures in the books. As a result of this they were frustrated and bored and we often had children creeping around to change their place on the mat so they can see the book better. Once we moved the chair, the children were far more attentive and many of our problems went away.

So the moral of this story is that when there are discipline and attention problems often the problem is with the teacher! (Besides the few who always play up). It's worth the time and effort to stop and think about the circumstances, the lesson content and the learning environment. A small change can make a big difference.

Have a Happy Mother's Day and happy teaching.

Regards Karin



