

Preschool Theme Newsletter – November 2013

Hello Everyone,

So here we are almost at the end of another year. I am sure you are all snowed under with end of year preparations and school reports. At this time of the year it feels like there is so much to do and so little time to do it all. But hang in there and as I always say 'and this too will pass'. I can't believe that Christmas is just around the corner again, so start planning your Christmas creative activities soon to make the most of this exciting time of the year. There are some photos of activities done in the past on the Preschool Theme Facebook page to give you some inspiration. https://www.facebook.com/preschoolthemes/photos_stream



This will be the last newsletter for 2013.

The first newsletter for 2014 will be sent in February

Thank you for all your encouragement and positive feedback. I so appreciate your support and I thank you all for all your hard work you put in to make the lives of our little people more enriched.

Enjoy your Christmas break and I hope you all get to spend some time with family and loved ones over the Festive Season.

I am very fortunate to be going to New York for 10 days at the beginning of December to see all the Christmas lights and to celebrate my 35th wedding anniversary which I am very much looking forward to. I am also blessed to be welcoming a grandson into our family at the end of January – the first boy in my family for many years – so we are very excited and have much to look forward to and to be grateful for.

Pinterest boards - Christmas

Please visit the Pinterest boards for new ideas. The Christmas board has over 150 ideas and I am constantly adding to the boards. <http://www.pinterest.com/kstedall/christmas-school/>

I have also created Pinterest boards for themes I have not written such as bottles, brushes, bees, pirates etc

Terminology changes

As you are all well aware the terminology used for planning your lessons is constantly being changed. I am all too aware of these changes as they affect the preschool theme manuals. I would like you to be aware that not all the terminology is exactly as it is in the CAPS or NELDS documents at the present moment as I cannot reword the manuals all the time to keep up with the changes. So please be aware that 'themes' are now known as 'topics'. I will be updating the terminology once the new NELDS outcomes are approved. The NELDS outcomes will be included eventually.... Always adapt the theme manuals to correlate to your personal and schools preparation requirements. The outcomes and the content are still correct and is valid for the CAPS outcomes. Although the NELDS outcomes are not included the lessons correlate very well with the current and future NELDS outcomes.

Creative activities with the 2-3 year olds



In the past two years I have had the opportunity to work with the 2-3 1/2 year olds fairly often and I have learnt a lot about which art activities work well and how to present them so you have success. Even though I have some experience of working with this age group I have learnt that not all art activities go according to plan! But more importantly I have learnt to relax and not get stressed out by it and to sometimes let the lesson take the path the children have determined. At the end of the day creative activities for this age group are all about having sensory experiences and gaining control over their bodies and the materials. So any creative activity will be of benefit to the children even if the end result does not match your 'adult' and precise vision.



One such lesson was **making flowers with cupcake paper cases and using coloured shaving cream** as the paint medium to add variety and a different sensory experience.

This was what I had in my head for the end product. (This is my demo picture for the children). The children were shown how to snip cuts around the paper case to make it look like a flower, paste it to the top of the page, add a pompom for the centre and then paint the stem and leaves using the coloured shaving cream. I sort of got this end product from a few of the older children but look at the variety of end products we had. The children loved the activity, many children participated and several remained at the table for some time (improving their concentration and perseverance skills). Several children asked to make another picture. All of the above points are enough pointers to tell me the lesson was a success even if the end product was not what I had in mind.

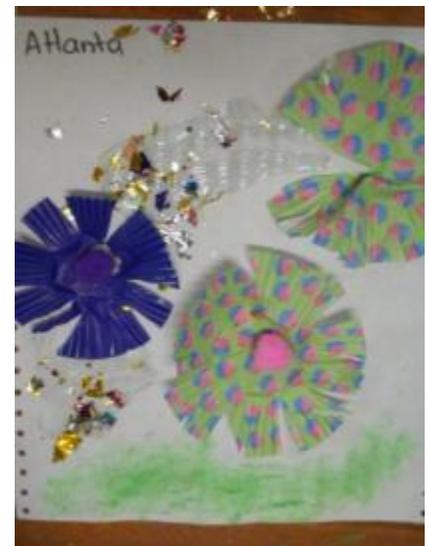
Just a note – snipping into paper cup cases is a great way for the younger children to practice their cutting skills as all that is required is a small snip which most of them can manage. Many have not really mastered opening and closing the scissors to continue the cutting actions. When you look at the different end results of this lesson bear in mind that the age range is from 2 years to 3 ½ years. I still believe this is too wide an age range as the abilities are very different from the youngest to the oldest child but this is how the children are grouped in New Zealand preschools.

On the next page I have posted a few photos to show you what the children chose to do with the materials and to observe some of the skills being used.



Skills:

- Small muscle development (fine motor)
- Eye hand co-ordination
- Cutting skills
- Self-control to not use excessive amounts of the materials
- Sensory integration



Art activity for the younger children at arrival time



It is always a good idea to set out a stimulating activity for the arrival time of the children in the morning. This is useful to prevent tears when the parents leave as there is something for the parents to distract the children with, and it engages their attention instead of having them run around being silly and noisy.

When selecting these activities always put out activities that do not need much teacher input and is kind of a general activity. A good example of this is pipe cleaner painting and covering the whole table with a sheet of paper so you don't have to worry about writing children's names on their art works. This frees you to greet the children and their parents.

For variety twist the pipe cleaners to be different so the marks they make are different. Ready mixed paint has been used here although it appears to be water colour paint. In the last photo the children are drawing freely with wax crayons on a group paper.



Coloured shape collage

Here is another good activity that doesn't require much teacher input. The children paste coloured paper shapes as a collage. Older children often spontaneously create pictures such as houses with their shapes

Hand printed tree



The teacher created the tree outline and the children did hand prints on and around the tree trunk. A few hand prints were cut out and pasted around the tree.

Early writing in the toddler age group

We have many children at school who have older siblings who spend time doing homework. The younger children love to imitate their older siblings. We have a box of exercise books with the children's names on them and these are freely available for the children to 'pretend' to write. Many of you indicate that you use worksheets at school but for the younger children this opportunity to practice and pretend to write is of more benefit than a worksheet. If you don't have budget for exercise books, make your own books by stapling pages together and get the children to draw a picture on the front cover and write their name for them. Occasionally write large words for the children to trace

over in the book and place word flash cards in the area for the children to copy. In the yellow photo the babies are



being exposed to their names while scribbling with wax crayons again on a group piece of paper

A flannel board story

<http://www.crayonfreckles.com/2011/10/very-hungry-pumpkin-felt-board-story.html>



I found this story on Pinterest and I have included the link above for the web site. The story is based on the very hungry caterpillar but instead it's a pumpkin that is hungry. Each day the pumpkin eats a different coloured food and each day of the week the amount of food increases. When the pumpkin eats blue food it changes into a blue pumpkin etc. So on Monday it eats one blueberry and changes into a blue pumpkin, Tuesday its yellow lemon juice and a yellow banana (2 foods) so the pumpkin changed to a yellow pumpkin. And so the story continues. I love activities that teach multiple concepts in one lesson. In this lesson children learn the days of the week, colours, number 1-7, different food names and sequencing. I have included a pumpkin on the next page for you to use with the story. You can get food pictures from clip art on the computer



Five currant buns rhyme (<http://picklebums.com/2013/09/10/five-currant-buns-free-printable-puppets/>)

For free coloured printables follow this link below

http://picklebums.com/images/printables/picklebums_currantbuns.pdf

Five Currant Buns

Five currant buns in a baker's shop,
Round and fat with a cherry on the top!
Along came a girl with some money one day,
Bought a currant bun and took it away.
Four currant buns in a baker's shop...
Three currant buns in a baker's shop...
Two currant buns in a baker's shop...
One currant bun in a baker's shop...

For more ideas for stories and rhymes please visit the stories and rhymes pinterest board

<http://www.pinterest.com/kstedall/stories-and-rhymes/>

Have fun and happy teaching
Regards Karin

