

## Preschool Theme Newsletter – October 2013

Hello Everyone,

Welcome to all the new members on my mailing list and hello to all my regulars. This newsletters main focus is around the theme of Pirates which we recently did with the 31/2 – 5 year olds. The theme culminated with a pirate dress up day with pirate activities planned for the whole day. The day was very eventful and exciting and unfortunately I don't have any photos to share with you. One teacher described the day as "being at a big 4 year old birthday party for 8 hours"!

Some other ideas for the pirate theme include pirate themed clothes in the fantasy area, an old boat in the outdoor area, pirate language, map making, flags and treasure hunts

I have pinned some ideas to the Pirate Pinterest board for more ideas

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



### Programmes for the 0-3 year olds

Many of you have asked for a programme for the 0-3 year olds. I have sourced the following two contacts. I have not seen either of the programmes and I do not know the costs. Please communicate directly with them.

1. This programme has been developed by Live2learn which is an NGO in the Western Cape. They have a programme, a toy kit and offer training. The programme is in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa.

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2. This one has been endorsed by an occupational therapist and has several worksheets that go with the programme. She indicated that the preschool themes work well with her programme. Her web site is being upgraded at the moment. Melissa Fine 0834242804

### New theme manual – Sea and the beach

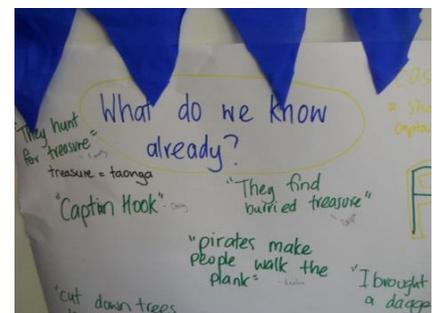
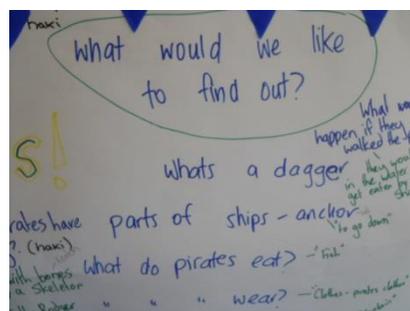
Sorry it's still under construction! I have been rather busy with the NELDS document

### New NELDS outcomes

In case you missed this mail here is the link to the new NELDS outcomes for the 0-4 year olds. It is still a draft document but the final is expected by mid-next year.

<http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=PgeHO3xJKXA%3d&tabid=905&mid=2565>

### Pirate theme



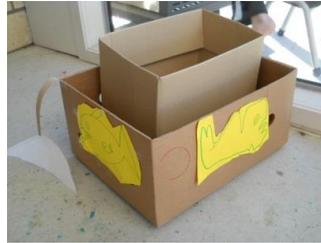
In New Zealand they work with a different philosophy and they do not plan themes for a year. Personally I way prefer to work with planned themes but in NZ the children's play and interests determine the theme. This month the theme has been Pirates so I have

included some of the activities they have done around the theme. I did not do all of these activities myself. The teachers brainstormed with the children during a mat time to establish what the children already knew and what they would like to know about Pirates. This was displayed as a concept web. The teachers created a big pirate ship wall display with word labels and this was the basis for further displays.



### Cardboard box pirate boats

One child had a plastic pirate ship which was loaned to school and the children enjoyed playing in it. This triggered an idea for some of the boys to make boats from a whole lot of cardboard boxes we got from the kitchen. They made a flag for the boat and drew and cut out fish to paste to the outside of the boat.



### Pirate hats

We made some pirate hats by folding newspaper for the children. The folding of the hats was more of a teacher directed activity, but they had lots of fun decorating and wearing their hats in free play time indoors and outdoors.

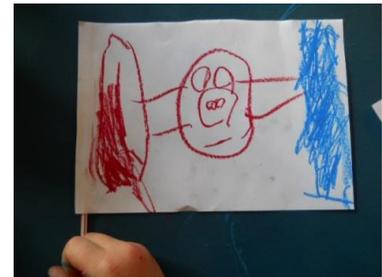
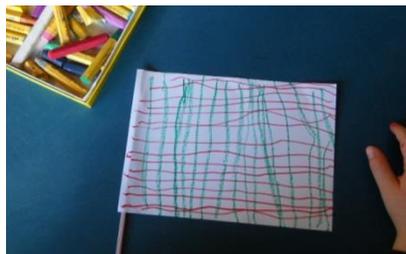
### Pirates

The children made their own pirates using a crumpled ball of paper and covered them with material scraps. These were displayed on the large pirate ship display. This did need quite a bit of teacher help but the children were very pleased with their pirates they had made.



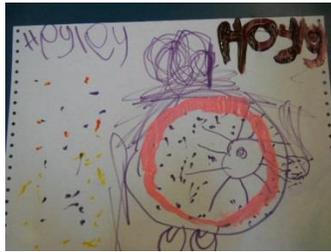
### Pirate ship flags

In mat time the children were asked to come and help design a pirate ship flag on the white board. They were then given flags to design their own. These were also displayed around the ship.



### Pirate ship parrots.

In NZ preschools creative activities are very open and unstructured as you can see from the children's own parrot creations. They painted a parrot, cut it out, stapled another paper behind this and left an opening to stuff the bird with shredded paper (you can use crumpled balls of paper) and then they were hung up to display them. As you can see from the photo's some look way more like a parrot than others! The picture below is of a 3 year old painting her parrot. Some feathers were added to the art table.



Personally if I did this lesson I would give the children 'parrot body shapes' such as an oval and triangles and let them construct a parrot before painting it. This clearly reflects the two ways of resending creative activities and both are correct – it all depends on your own personal philosophy.

What is not acceptable is giving the children a photocopied parrot to colour and cut out. With enough stimulation by looking at parrot pictures and identifying the shapes and colours in a mat time you should get some lovely parrots. This will only be suitable for the older children. **Younger children:** For the younger children give the children parrot colour paints such as red and yellow (they will over paint the colours to create some orange) and then when the painting is dry, let them print on the painting with green paint using whatever you choose to print with. Alternatively you can get them to add some green colour by painting with feathers. If you prefer the children can 'draw and scribble' on the paintings with green koki pens or green wax crayons. If you don't have paint the children can colour and draw with parrot coloured wax crayons and colour wash with diluted yellow and red food colouring as a wax resist.

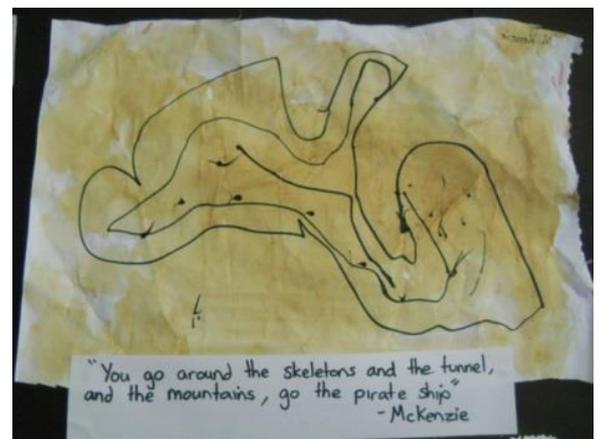
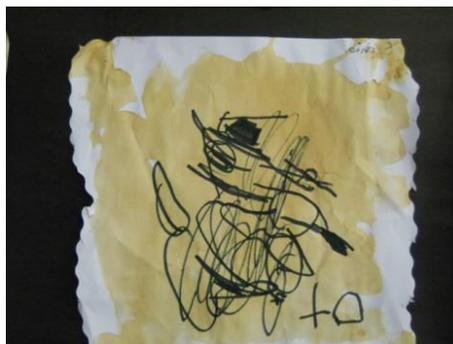
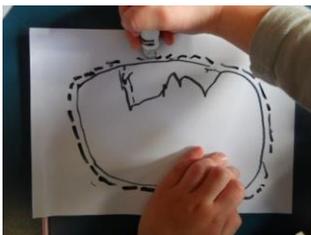


Another idea

Once dry, teacher uses these paintings to cut out parrots and create a display or prepare the shapes so that the children can stuff them. Another idea is to use these paintings to cut out feathers and make a few big parrots adding the feathers.

### Pirate treasure maps

The children drew their own treasure maps using a black koki pen. They colour washed the maps using diluted brown food colouring or strong tea would give the same effect. The children told the teacher how to find the treasure and she wrote it down for them and attached it to the picture. This is a very good emergent literature activity as the children understand that pictures have meaning which can be written in words



### Paper plate pirates (this is my example)



I have had to get used some big changes in the way I do creative activities with the children in NZ as opposed to how we do them in SA. One thing is that you cannot buy paper plates in the supermarket. (The other is you are not allowed to use toilet rolls or any food for art as it's culturally insensitive to the Maoris). I was very pleased to find a packaging and paper company that sells paper plates which I used for this activity.

The children were given an eye patch and half a circle of red paper. It was interesting to see the different interpretations of where to position things. Another

thing in NZ is you don't have a time when you can show the whole group the art activity. They come to the activity over a period of time and you have to explain to each one what to do. Without decent mat time stimulation and showing the activity to the whole group, and the open ended art technique you do end up with a big variety of end products. This is not all bad but it has taken me some time to get used to. We named our pirates and I wrote the name on the hat. (Emergent reading and writing)



The pirate face on the left is a very nice example of what we call a 'red flag' for potential learning problems. This child is a little younger than the above three but she had no clue on how to create a face. In fact she even turned the paper plate over and painted on the back of the plate. She was not willing to take any help or advice from me.

In SA you would make a note about this event in your observations and see if it happens regularly over time for it to be noted as a problem. Just for your interest this child has several other problems over a range of developmental areas.

### Floating and Sinking

As an extension on the Pirate theme the teacher presented a mat time on floating and sinking. She showed the children several items and they all predicted what would float and what would sink. It was interesting to hear their predictions and the reasons for making the choice. They were also impatient to test the items and some children actually asked the teacher "just test it so we can see!"



### Useful article on difficult children

<http://shutthedoorandteach.blogspot.co.nz/2012/09/when-bad-guy-is-right.html>

This is a link to a very interesting article on how to get difficult children on your side. Every bit of help and advice in this area should be appreciated.

Have fun and happy teaching

Regards Karin