

Preschool Themes Newsletter – October 2016

Hello Everyone,

I can't believe I am writing the October newsletter. It feels like it was just the other day that we started a new teaching year. Enjoy the last break before you start the final count down to the very busy year end. The weather has warmed up considerably but we are still having lots of wet weather. We have been very busy at our school continuing to promote the outdoor environment as the third teacher.

Price increase in January: An advanced pre warning that there will be a price increase in January of the preschool themes manuals. We have not determined the amount yet.

The outdoor environment as the third teacher

We have an open play area adjacent to our school which has been developed as an adventure area for the children. We planned a "bush" day with the children. The idea was to make a fire from what they could collect in the area, braai their sausages for hot dogs for lunch, create a shelter from the poles and branches lying around and they could only play with what they found in the area. Unfortunately it rained most of the morning but they went ahead as planned with all the children in raincoats. It was still a fun day but could have been so much more of a learning event than it was.

If you would like to make a fire at school and cook some food a very good idea is to create a boundary area using sticks to keep the children a safe distance from the fire.



Growing vegetables

To extend the outdoor learning the children planted seeds in pots and once germinated, they planted them into the school vegetable garden. The vegetables are often prepared as part of the school menu with the children helping to pick the vegetables and fruit, prepare them with the teacher and then eat it together at meal times.

The teacher set up a worm farm and the fertilizer from the worms runs directly into the vegetable bed. We painted some pots for the children to plant in.



Art activities

Explosion painting using bicarbonate of soda and coloured vinegar

The children absolutely loved this activity and I went through 50 paper plates in a short space of time as so many children wanted to have a go and many wanted to do several plates. I found the larger paper plate was a better choice. This is also a science activity. When vinegar wets Bicarbonate of Soda it reacts and bubbles up like a volcano erupting. The colours also blend to create new colours. While the paintings were drying I had to continually chase away children dragging their fingers through the bubbled colour as they found it fascinating.

Theme: Colours

Other themes: Summer- make suns with reds and yellows, Caring for our world – use blue and green

Ages: 3 ½ - 5 year olds

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

Method

For this activity I had the children paint the base of the paper plate with a good layer of glue. They sprinkled bicarbonate of soda onto the glue and tipped off the excess. Some lumps needed to be squashed flat. Using the pipettes, the children sucked up some food colouring which is diluted with neat vinegar – no water and dropped drops of colouring onto the bicarb and loved seeing the reaction of it bubbling up. They continued to drop different colours onto the bicarb.



Pipettes or plastic droppers

These are plastic tubes which you squeeze at the end and it sucks up the liquid. When you release the pressure the liquid runs out. They are inexpensive and can usually be bought from an educational toy shop. If you don't have pipettes then an eye dropper or a thin paint brush could do the job. Just be careful with paint brushes that the children don't use the brush to try and paint the bicarb. It makes a big mess.

Alternatively you can try showing the children to place a straw in the liquid, hold their finger on the top which will suck up some liquid and then release the finger to allow the liquid to drop onto the bicarb. This will only be successful with the older children. Teaspoons allow too much liquid to be picked up and you will end up with a plate full of liquid which is very messy.

Some important points to be aware of

I had both the bicarb and the vinegar food colouring on one table and some of the children let some bicarb fall into the coloured vinegar. This caused a reaction in the container which meant that it was no longer effective on the bicarb. If you have the bicarb at one table and the vinegar at another table this should not be a problem.

- Dilute the food colouring with neat vinegar – not water
- It's best to put the food colouring in a flat container to prevent the child from sucking up too much in the pipette
- It is best to present this activity at two tables. Some of the bicarb fell into the food colouring trays and reacted with the vinegar which resulted with the vinegar then not responding on the paper plate.
- No pipettes – use thin paint brushes or teaspoons but remind the child not to put too much liquid at one time
- Some children did use way too much liquid. I just poured the excess off but it spoiled the effect
- This is a very popular activity so have lots of materials and paper plates. Many children did several
- Some children needed help with using the pipette



If you have a limited amount of bicarbonate of soda it may be better to sprinkle the bicarb onto the paper plate for the child to prevent too much waste. If possible buy it in bulk packets.



This child only used red and yellow colouring and I love the end product. It looks like a sun and will be a great activity for the theme of weather or summer



Cardboard headbands with feathers

A parent brought us some corrugated cardboard from an outdoor set that was packaged in it. I cut it into strips of about 15 come and long enough to go around a child's head. The cardboard can be decorated in many different ways. I chose to print with circles. This activity appealed to all the children especially the boys and the younger children. It does need a bit of space as the strips of paper are quite long. If you need to you can extend the hat strip by adding in a piece of coloured cardboard (left picture)

Theme: Shapes

Other themes: Birds, hats, clothes, Red Indians

Ages: 3 ½ - 5 year olds

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

Materials:

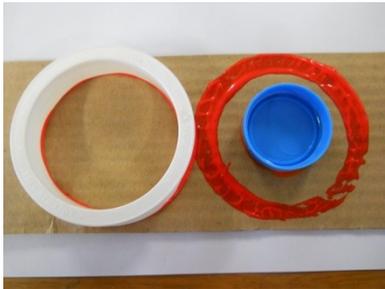
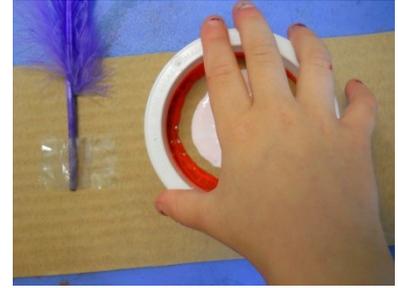
- Strips of cardboard – corrugated cardboard or coloured card long enough to fit around a child's head
- Lids – different sizes and shapes
- Feathers – purchased or collected from birds
- Stapler or tape
- Paint in a flat container



Method:

The child selects 3 feathers and tapes the feathers to the centre of the head band which has been prepared ahead of time by the teacher. The child selects different lids and prints circles along the headband. Once the headband is dry the teacher staples the headband together.





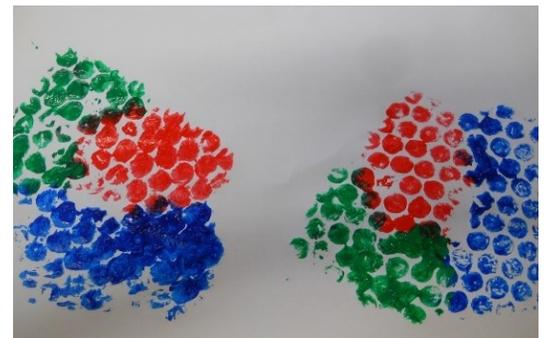
Notes:

- If using corrugated cardboard make sure the children use the smooth side to print on
- Some children did not paste the feathers in the centre
- It's best to dry the head bands before you staple them together
- Limit the amount of feathers for each child otherwise you may not have enough
- The children used Cellotape to adhere the feathers but a stapler may be better
- The strips take up a lot of space on the table so make sure you have enough space
- White paint is effective on the brown cardboard
- Some of the younger children preferred to paint with the printing gadgets and were unable to place the feather in the centre



Painting and printing – on bubble wrap

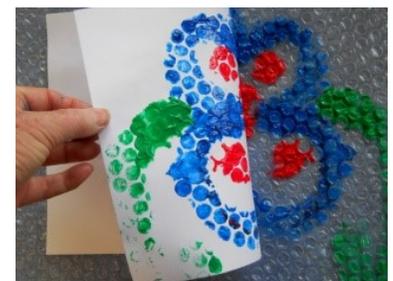
I often get large pieces of bubble wrap from parcels etc. It's a very useful and versatile medium and the children love using it. For this activity I chose to cover the whole table with the bubble wrap and let the children paint randomly on the bubble wrap. We then laid a piece of paper onto the painting, rubbed gently and then lifted to create a print. This can be repeated once or twice without adding paint. Alternatively you can cut the bubble wrap and give each child a piece to paint on. This is a very sensory activity that can be enjoyed by the younger children and the older ones. The younger children will not paint a picture but with the help of the teacher they can take a print of their painting too. This activity works best with ready mixed paint.



Themes: Five Senses, Colours, hands

Ages: 2½ - 5 year olds

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



Materials:

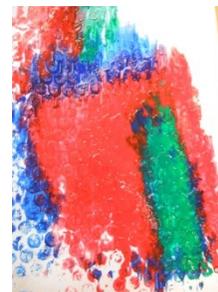
- Bubble wrap – large piece to cover the table or individual pieces for each child
- Paint – 3 colours
- Paint brushes
- Paper – A4

Method:

The teacher tapes the large sheet of bubble wrap to the table if using a large sheet. The child paints a picture of their choice or according to a theme from the teacher on the bubble wrap. The child places a sheet of paper over the painting and gently rubs over the back of the paper to pick up the print. The child lifts the paper to reveal a print of the painting in the dots of the bubble wrap. A second print can be taken without repainting the image.

**Notes:**

- The best prints result when enough paint is used.
- The younger children don't need to paint a picture which makes it a good activity for the 2 year olds
- The 2 year olds may need help with the printing part but this part can be left out
- The children can paint over other children's pictures or replace the bubble wrap
- Discourage the children from popping the bubbles of the bubble wrap
- Remind the children not to paint too large a picture

**Battery operated bubble maker**

Do you have a bubble maker machine at your school. This machine is battery operated and generates a stream of bubbles. The younger children love chasing and popping the bubbles.

Have a wonderful break if you are lucky enough to get one.

Happy teaching
Regards
Karin

