

Preschool Themes Newsletter – April 2015

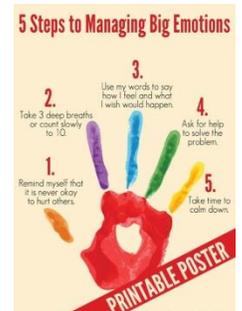
Hello Everyone,

I hope you all had a happy Easter and did not overdo the chocolate! If you have had a break I hope it was a restful one although somewhat short. In April we have Earth day on the 22nd and it's the ideal time to incorporate the theme of 'caring for our world' with great ideas on recycling and saving energy. Mother's day is coming up in May and I have included several ideas for you to think about doing with the children. I know it's early but the May edition of the newsletter will be too late for some of your planning programmes. If you look back at some of the archived newsletters (April and May editions) you will find ideas I included in past newsletters. Likewise if you are looking for inspiration then look back at some of the past newsletters on the web site www.preschoolthemes.co.za under newsletters. The second term is always easier than the first term and I love the cooler weather before the winter sets in. There are so many beautiful ideas to do for the autumn theme. Our classroom is always awash with reds, oranges, yellows and browns welcoming autumn into our classroom.



Managing children's behaviour

Some days at school I feel like all I have done is manage children's behaviour especially with the toddler age group. I long for days where they all play peacefully and happily so I can engage in some meaningful play with small groups of children, but the reality is that there is not often much opportunity for this. It is also challenging to always react and respond in a positive and supportive manner especially when it's always the same children that you are speaking to. If you can identify with these feelings then please read the article I attached with the newsletter. There are also **two posters you can print out** (<http://childhood101.com/2015/03/helping-children-manage-big-emotions/>) and put up in your classroom to remind yourself and the children what steps are needed to control their own behaviour and also how to calm down.



An expression we use often in our classroom when children are being disruptive and aggressive and we need to ask them to stop is 'Are you making good choices?' as opposed to saying 'are you being naughty'. Obviously this only works if you have had a mat time discussion on what good choices are and when and how to make them. So as an example you might ask the children if it's a good choice to hit your friend if you are upset with them and what other choices could you make instead. Discuss activities they could do if they are feeling angry and upset and for the older children record these ideas as a list for the classroom. If children make the rules and suggestions it is more likely that they will adhere to them. Even the toddlers can understand this discussion and those who have sufficient words can offer suggestions. A bit of role play works well here.



I feel quite passionate about **teaching children socially acceptable ways to manage their emotions and feelings**. We live in a society that is way too aggressive and impulsive and people don't take responsibility for their choices and actions. Training starts at the preschool level as they begin to assert themselves and attempt to gain control over the environment. These are skills that need to be learned and like everything else in life practiced and reinforced until they become habit and a part of life.

One of your many roles as a preschool teacher is to help our little people learn these skills in a safe and consistent way.

This topic is a great one for a parents evening. By making it interactive and asking parents to suggest techniques they have used that work for them and by sharing the techniques you use at school with the parents you will make an awesome team with consistency and support for the children.

It is also necessary to have teacher meetings to agree on the strategies and techniques you all agree on and will implement consistently across the whole school.

PS: Some adults have not learnt these skills yet

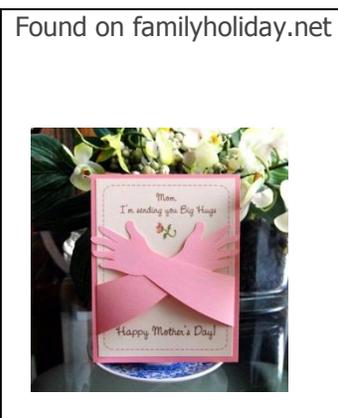
More on this in the May newsletter but if you would like to peek at another article with great ideas <http://www.teachpreschool.org/2014/07/self-regulation-the-1-skill-for-success-in-school-and-life/>

Earth day activities – April 22nd

<https://www.pinterest.com/kstedall/caring-for-our-world/> have many more. This is just a sample.



Mother's day ideas

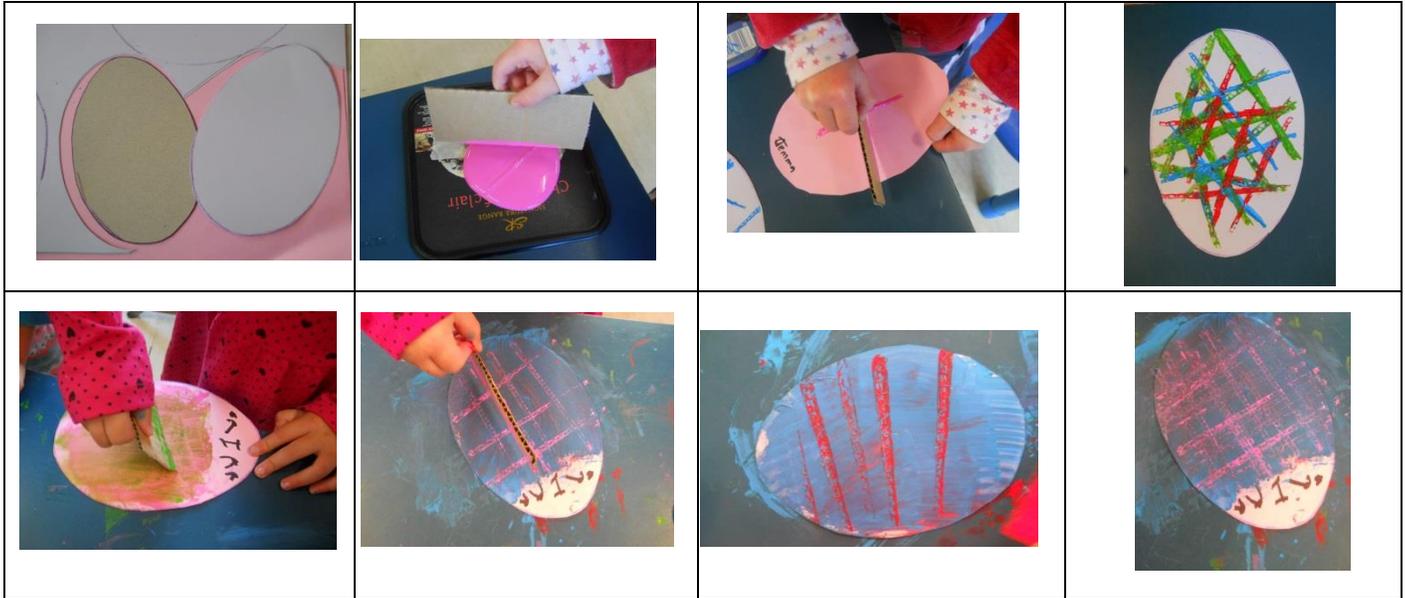


Art activities

Easter activities – printing eggs with cardboard printers

I know Easter is over but you could use some of these techniques with other themes (egg printing = oval shapes)

I gave the children oval shaped lightweight cardboard eggs to print. I cut pieces of cardboard boxes into smaller pieces and set out paint on flat lids. The children dipped the cardboard edge into the paint and printed patterns onto the egg shape.



Notes:

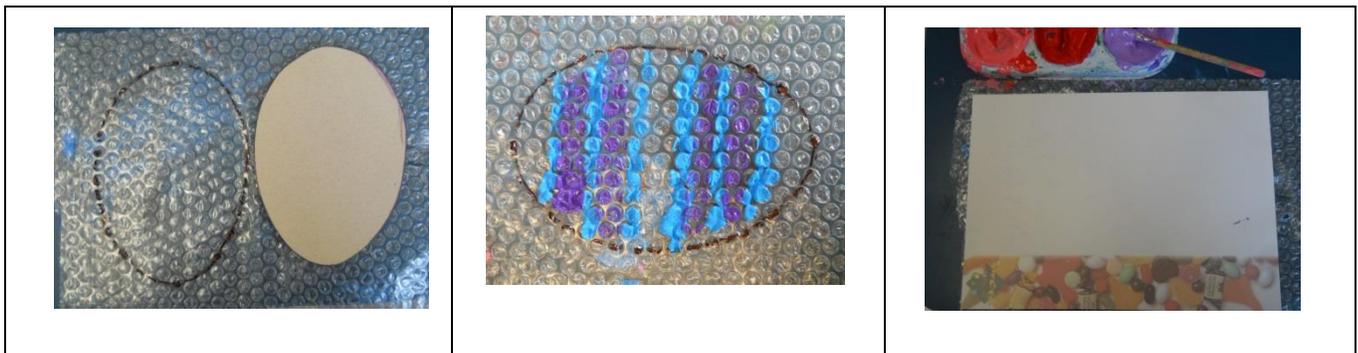
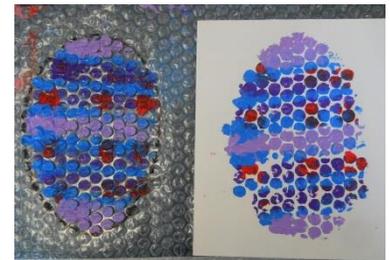
- Some children decided to use the printing cardboard to smear the paint on the cardboard oval. I then suggested they print strips on top of the painted egg shape which was as effective.
- Some of the cardboard printers fell into the paint and got messy so have a few spares
- It is most effective if the cardboard you select for the printers is quite thick – you need a thick edge
- Thick paint is best
- I used a template to cut out the egg shapes and cut several layers at the same time.
- Older children can cut their own egg shapes
- Have several eggs cut out – they wanted to make several eggs.



Bubble printed eggs

I drew an egg shape on a piece of bubble print. The children paint the bubble wrap within the shape. Once the shape is filled with paint, the child places a piece of paper onto the painted bubble wrap. They gently rub the paper to make a print of the egg and lift the paper up to see the egg shaped print.

The prints can be cut out once dry. Two or three prints can be taken.



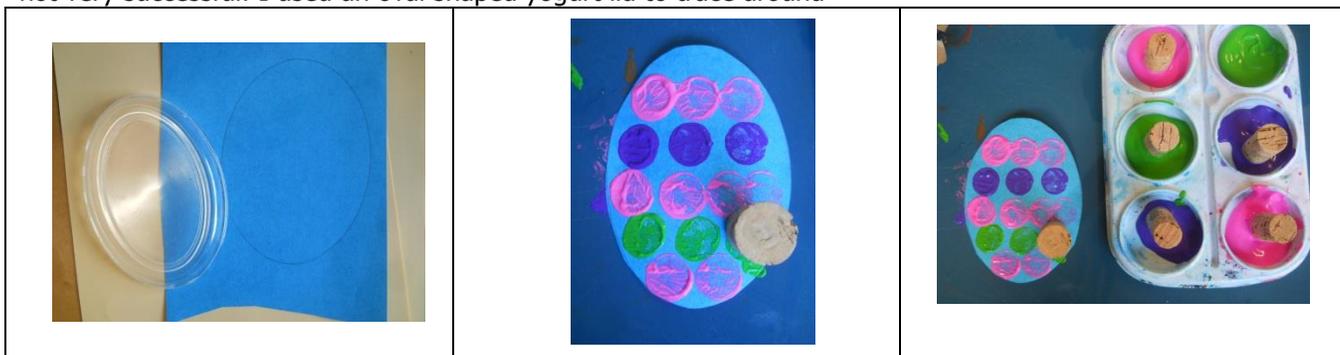
Easter basket using a paper plate and cork printed eggs

I cut basket shapes from paper plates for the children. I added glue to brown paint and cut brown paper into smaller strips (I used zig zag scissors but it's not essential). The children 'painted' the wrong side of the paper plate with brown glue paint and pasted pieces of brown paper to create the basket.



Printing eggs

I gave the children oval shaped cardboard. They printed patterns using the corks. Put the paint into flat containers and use thick paint. Some children chose to try and paint with the cork which was not very successful! I used an oval shaped yogurt lid to trace around



Once the baskets and eggs were dry I stapled the egg into the basket.

A few children didn't want to use the brown paint for the basket and 'painted' their basket with the corks. (In NZ we work in a different way with an open art area so it's hard to control this, but in SA you would place the activities at different tables and it should not happen) I am still trying to get my head around the open art area concept. It does have some positives and allows for lots of creativity. As you can see below the right one is my idea of the end product but the other two children had a different idea for their baskets. They look great too.



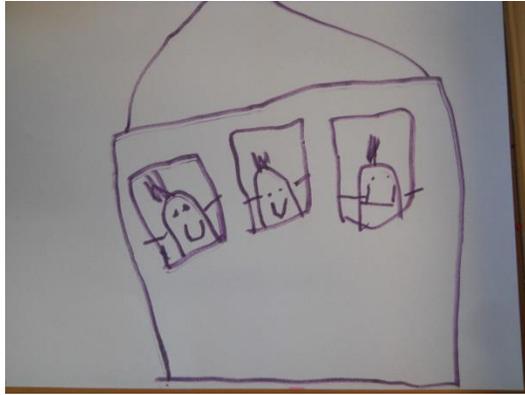
The basket should be painted on the wrong side of the paper plate. Some children (mainly the girls of course!) complained that they didn't like the brown colour so consider using pretty colours. I just chose brown for a basket colour!



The concept of the basket could be used to make a mother's day card. Instead of eggs paint or create paper flowers and paste them in the basket. Perhaps you could attach a tag saying
Love you a whole bunch full.

A few other ideas

Free drawing and stencil tracing



Free art with cupcake liners and collage materials



Paper plate tiger

Anja asked for a paper plate to make a tiger. She is almost five years old. She created this tiger all by herself with absolutely no input from me. This is one of the joys of the open art area. Interesting enough paper plates are not sold in the supermarket in New Zealand which frustrates me as I have to buy them from a packaging place and they are not part of school stock.



Happy teaching
Regards Karin

TWO AND A HALF

Hold him a little longer

Rock him a little more

Tell him another story

(you've only told him four)

Let him sleep on your shoulder

Rejoice in his happy smile

He is only two and a half

For such a little while!

-Author Unknown