

## Preschool Themes Newsletter – June 2016

Hello Everyone,

I can't believe how warm it's been this autumn not that I am complaining one bit. Autumn in NZ has come late this year and has been much shorter so it's been a busy week of creating autumn art activities at school. I love doing autumn art as there are just so many activities to choose from. Your classrooms should all be glowing with reds, oranges, yellows and browns.

Father's day is in June so once again I have included a few ideas for you to do with the children. Please visit the Pinterest board for more fathers' day ideas. <https://nz.pinterest.com/kstedall/fathers-day/>

Remember to be sensitive to the many different family structures and to allow some children to make two cards if they are from a blended family (step dads or grandad or uncle if there is no dad)



### Mat time before creative activities

Imagine you have been asked by your teacher to draw and create an ellahump. The first question you may well ask her is "what is an ellahump?" Without the knowledge you will be unable to accurately reproduce what an ellahump is. The same goes for the children in your group. Some may not have experiences of things you ask them to draw or create, so it's always best to spend time in your language mat time giving the children knowledge and experiences of the theme so they are able to create with meaning. Obviously at times the creative activity is more of an experience or a process art activity that does not require any previous knowledge.

Before you present an art activity that requires the children to draw, paint or collage a bare tree and then add the autumn leaves, the children need to spend some time observing and looking at a tree structure in order to have the knowledge to do this. The children need to be aware that a tree has a tree trunk, a few main branches and then smaller branches and that the leaves are only on the branches or the ground and not on the tree trunk. To achieve this knowledge you can go outside and observing a real tree, look at pictures of real trees in books or on a poster and/or you can draw a tree on a board for the children by asking leading questions such as; where do we place the tree trunk, the branches, the leaves etc. If you have blocks the children can build a tree shape on the floor. Give each child a block and go around the circle asking for the biggest blocks first to build the tree trunk and adding the branches with the smaller blocks.



### Art activities

Autumn art activities are a good opportunity to focus on and reinforce the colours of red, yellow, orange and brown.

Once the children have the knowledge of the structure of a tree you will have better autumn trees. In NZ they don't work with a theme and because I don't work every day I am unable to do the mat time prior to presenting the art activity to the children. So you will notice I have a lot of painted tree trunks!!



#### Autumn trees with bubble printed leaves

For this activity I cut some cereal boxes into tree trunk sized pieces and some thinner pieces for the branches. You may choose to put out scissors at the table for the children to cut some of the branches to be smaller, but be aware that some children may cut all your branches into really small pieces!



I offered the children light brown slightly thicker paper to carry the weight of the cereal boxes. Use strong white school glue for this activity

To make the bubble wrap printing tubes I cut bubble wrap into squares and attached them to the end of strong cardboard tubes using an elastic band (string or Cellotape will also work). I set out red, yellow and orange paint on flat ice cream lids. The children created the tree outline first and then printed autumn leaves over the branches.

**Optional:**

- The branches can be painted brown but this is best done the day before and left to dry otherwise the brown will merge with the autumn coloured paint and become a muddy mess.
- I gave the children some wood shavings to glue to their tree trunks. It did not stick well and it was better if the children cut the wood curls into smaller pieces. Tea leaves or sawdust will be more effective.



Note the nice bubble print circles when the printing is done gently as opposed to the next picture where the paint has been smeared with the printing tube.



### Notes:

- Some children printed the tree trunk. Encourage them to remember to only print the branches
- Some children used the printing tubes to smear the paint instead of printing
- Some children were stamping so hard that you never got nice bubble circle prints
- Some children pasted the cereal boxes with the coloured side up. Encourage them to use the grey side up
- Encourage them to put the glue on the cardboard rather than the paper
- The children need to use a good amount of glue.



### 3 year olds

The above activity may be too difficult for most three year olds. (Max in the above picture is 3 ½ and he coped quite well) To adapt this activity you can create a few large tree outlines and have several children print leaves on the tree branches.

Alternatively you can give each child a pre-cut leaf shape which they print and then attach all the printed leaves to one large tree outline. The tree trunk and branches of the group tree can be painted by the children. It is best to cut out the tree trunk and branches before it is painted otherwise this age group will just paint the paper and not stay within the tree trunk and branches.

### More autumn tree ideas

Using the above idea to create the tree outlines I changed the way the leaves were created.

#### Squashed toilet roll to print the leaves

I added brown paint but because it was an afterthought the children could not paint the branches as they were already printed. It would be work better if the tree and branches were painted the day before and were dry for printing the leaves.



#### Finger printed leaves

This is a great for the younger age group. The leaves were printed using all five fingers at one time. Make sure your paint is on a flat container such as an ice cream lid.



## Painting autumn leaves



I went for a walk with my 2 year old grandson at the lake near my home in NZ and there were autumn leaves everywhere. He enjoyed jumping in the leaves and throwing them in the air. I could not resist collecting a big pile of leaves to take to school to paint.



I stapled two leaves to A3 yellow and orange paper. I set out red and yellow paint and the children painted the leaves overpainting the two colours to create orange. Some of the children chose to sprinkle glitter on the paint (glitter is always freely available in the open art area at my school). I really like the end result.

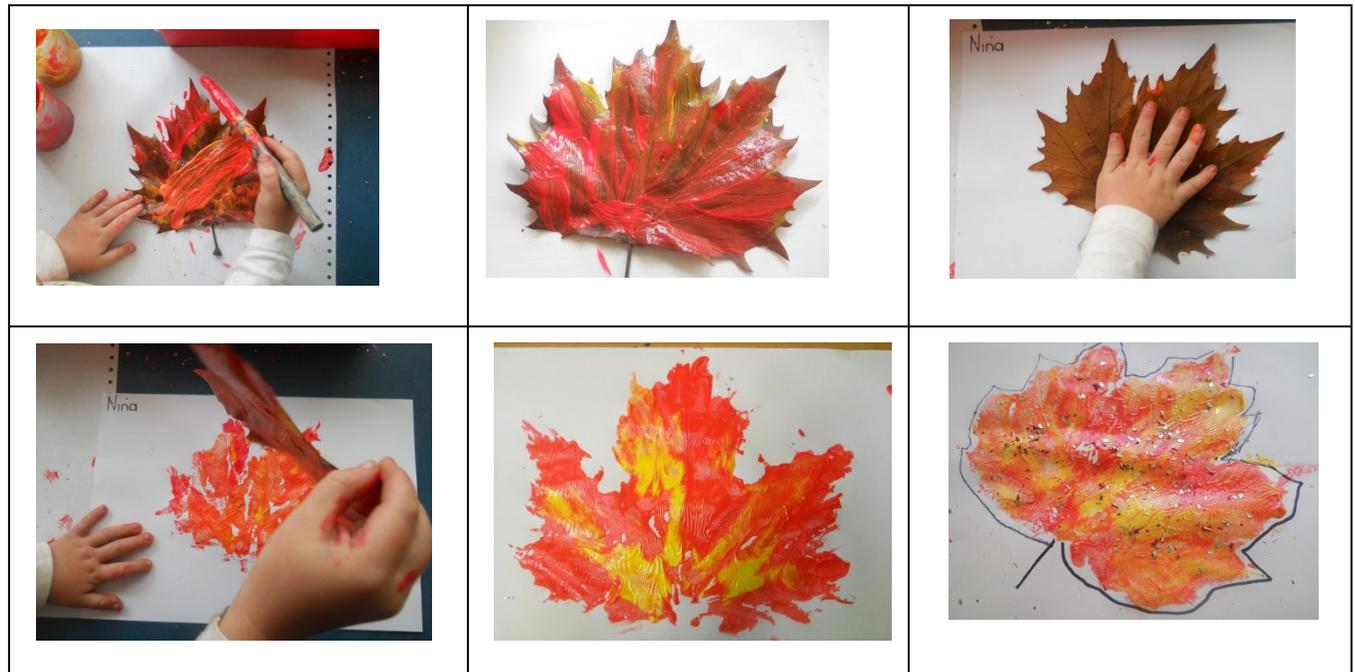
Some children especially the younger children may paint the paper around the leaves which is fine. If you really only want the leaves painted then allow the children to paint the leaves first and when dry staple them to the paper.

**Note – Using glue to secure the leaves to the paper is a waste of time. Staples work the best.**



## Leaf printing

We extended this activity and used the lovely big firm leaves to create leaf prints. The children painted the leaves and placed them paint face down onto white paper. The children carefully rubbed the leaf onto the paper; then carefully lifted the leaf off the paper to reveal a leaf print. The leaf can be used again to create a new print. For the older children you can encourage them to draw a dark outline.



## Sticky paper leaves

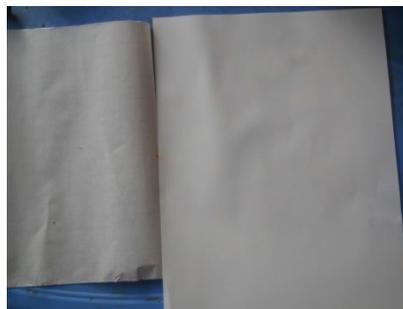
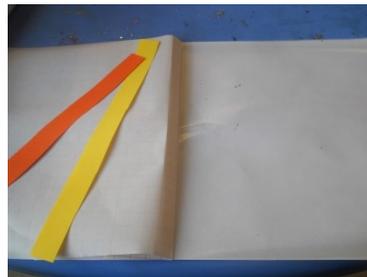
I found a roll of clear adhesive plastic in the bargain bin – the kind you use to cover books and laminate pictures.

I cut some orange and yellow paper (you can add red and brown if you like) into strips about 1 cm wide. It's important that you don't make the strips too wide as the

children will use the snipping cutting action to snip the paper into smaller pieces. This is a great way to practice cutting skills. Each child snipped the paper strips onto the sticky clear paper. Once the paper was fairly well covered with snipped paper, we laid a piece of white paper onto the sticky surface, gave it a good rub to make sure it was stuck together, turned it over and then traced hand shaped leaves onto the plastic. Some of the children chose to do this independently but I did it for several children. I preferred to make points for the drawn

leaves versus going around the fingers. Once the outline was drawn the children or teacher cut out the shape to create leaves. These were pressticked to the window to create a beautiful display. This is not suitable for the younger children unless your group is small and can be closely supervised. This crumpled up sticky mess is what one of the 3 year olds did!

**Note:** Select an area that has lots of paper snips when drawing your leaf hand shape.



## Hand trees with snipped paper leaves

Leading on from the snipping leaf activity we made snipped paper leaf trees.

I traced the child's hand about a third up from the bottom of the paper and then once the hand was removed I drew in a tree trunk. The children carefully painted within the lines of the tree using brown paint. They spread glue above the tree branches and snipped the paper strips into smaller pieces to create the leaves. Some of the children managed this quite well while others found it easier to cut the paper into pieces on the table, and then pick up the pieces and place them on the tree. I showed the children how to lick their finger and to then use the wet finger to pick up the small piece of paper and place it on the tree. For the younger children you may need to provide snipped pieces of paper or use toilet paper squares crumpled up and painted.



I was concerned that painting the glue onto the wet brown paint would be a problem but it was fine.



## Leaf people

Use the leaf as the body of the person and draw the head, arms and legs. I did not get to do this with the children so this is my example. Optional: paint the leaf in autumn colours

Happy teaching and remember to make Father's day special for all the men in your lives.

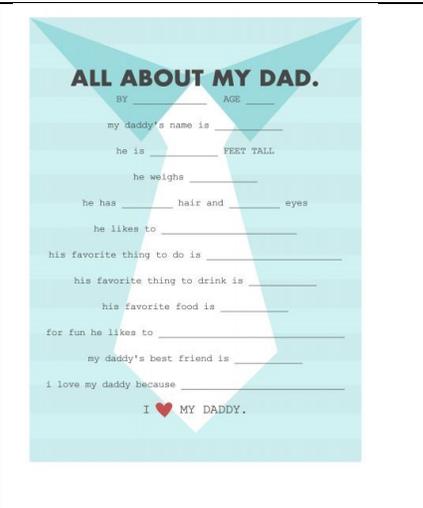
Regards  
Karin



Father's day ideas – these are from the Pinterest boards and are not my own ideas.



[https://nz.pinterest.com/dreaming\\_in\\_DIY/](https://nz.pinterest.com/dreaming_in_DIY/)



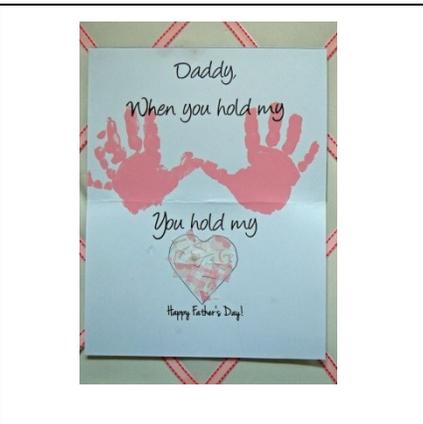
<https://nz.pinterest.com/blissfullyd/>



<https://nz.pinterest.com/source/dildium.com>



[https://nz.pinterest.com/source/easy\\_preschoolcraft.blogspot.com](https://nz.pinterest.com/source/easy_preschoolcraft.blogspot.com)



<https://nz.pinterest.com/hativesite/>



<https://nz.pinterest.com/source/blupla.com>



Maybe change this to one hand only!

<https://nz.pinterest.com/source/instagram.com>



<https://nz.pinterest.com/source/ihearnaptime.net>



<https://nz.pinterest.com/source/sbcreatively.blogspot.com>