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Preschool Themes Newsletter – April 2021

Hello Everyone

I hope you are staying well and safe and that life has resumed some sense of normality for you all. It's been a particularly challenging time and we can all pat ourselves on the back for having got through this time. I wish you all a Happy Easter and may it be a blessed and restful time for you and your families. Please be safe and travel carefully if you are going away for a break.

I have enjoyed doing lots of Easter art activities with the children in the lead up to Easter. These activities are on my preschool themes Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/preschoolthemes>.



May has Mother's Day so I have included a few ideas for you to consider. These were done for Valentine's day but could work well for Mother's Day too. Please visit my Mother's Day Pinterest board for many other ideas and activities to do with the children. <https://www.pinterest.nz/kstedall/mothers-day-ideas/>

Attention seeking children



We can all identify with the "attention seeking" children in the group. They are often disruptive to gain your attention or they seem to be very needy and seek out one on one time with you. This can be a bit frustrating especially if you have a large group of children or several of these attention seeking children in one group. I thought this quote was very suitable and a great way to change the way we think about these children. I think this is even more relevant with all the insecurities created from Covid and the long periods of time the children were not at school. By helping these children to feel secure and connected with a sense of belonging, the attention seeking behaviour should reduce. It may take a bit of time and consistent reinforcement

before you see a change in the behaviour of these children. Give these children some extra attention and wherever possible comment on good behaviour instead of focussing on the negative behaviour. Even if the behaviour is not specifically good but good for the child whose behaviour is not normally compliant.

Some of the latest research on addictions suggests a lack of secure connections in early childhood predisposes the person to being influenced easily and resorting to addictions to drugs and other substances. While you are not solely responsible for these connections being formed as an ECE, the children do spend a lot of time in your care and you can make a difference by the way you respond to their needs. Just something to think about. This article is worth a read.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/nz/blog/love-and-sex-in-the-digital-age/201509/the-opposite-addiction-is-connection>

It is clear from Bowlby's work and the work of later researchers that the level and calibre of trust and connection experienced in early childhood carries forth into adulthood. Those who experience secure attachment as infants, toddlers, and small children nearly always carry that with them into adulthood, and they are naturally able to trust and connect in healthy ways. Meanwhile, those who don't experience secure early-life attachment tend to struggle with trust and connection later in life. In other words, securely attached individuals tend to feel comfortable in and are able to enjoy life, while insecurely attached people typically struggle to fit in and connect. Guess which group is more vulnerable to addiction? The good news is that people with insecure attachment styles are not locked into this approach for life. With proper guidance and a fair amount of conscious effort the individuals who were not graced with secure attachment in childhood (and therefore the ability to easily connect in adulthood) can learn to securely attach. For the addicted, earned security is an especially important concept. With the addicted, there is further work to be done, and part of that work nearly always involves overcoming the lack of trust and connection created in childhood.

Creative activities

Mother's Day love bugs

These make a cute Mother's Day gift to say you are my love bug.

Themes: Valentine's day, Colour – pink, Garden visitors, Bugs

Ages: 4 - 5-year-olds

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

Materials:

- Paper plate – small or large
- Glue and glue brushes
- Tissue paper – cut into about 3 x 3 cm squares but no need to measure
- Googly eyes
- Doilies for wings – either heart shaped or a round one cut into quarters
- Cardboard strips for the body and the feelers

Optional: Punched hearts or cut out hearts



Method: Teacher: Prepare the tissue paper squares making sure they are separated and cut the cardboard strips

are separated and cut

Child: The child covers the front of the paper plate with glue and pastes squares of tissue paper to cover the plate. Its easiest to pick up the tissue paper squares with the glue brush. Paste the paper strips as stripes on the body starting across the middle. Some strips may need to be cut or torn to fit the space. The child adds a face using the googly eyes and a heart for the nose. The doily wings are pasted to either side of the paper plate. It seems to work better pasting to the front of the paper plate and not the back. Optional to decorate with foil hearts or glitter.

Suggestion: The doily wings can be coloured with Koki pens





Notes:

- Painting the doily wings is not a good idea. Leave them white or colour with Koki pens
- Some children wanted to add a tail/sting so I gave them an extra doily



Valentine's day love bugs

While this activity is focussed on Valentine's day and Mother's Day it can easily be adapted to make bees and other garden visitor bugs such as lady bugs.

Bees – cover the paper plate with yellow pieces of tissue paper and add black stripes. Add a triangle of black paper for the sting.

Ladybird – cover the paper plate with red tissue paper and add black dots and a black strip of paper to show the wings and the head. Add 6 strips of black paper for the legs.

Integration: Language or story time: The children named their love bug and shared what they loved to do.

Mother's Day hearts with drawing things they love that their mother does for them or what they like doing with their mom.

The children can turn this into a Mother's Day card by pasting the heart to a cardboard card and drawing all the things they love about their mom or love doing with their mom or things their moms do for them that they love about her.

Inside the card you can add a list of things I love about my mom and ask the children to tell you while you write them down. This is an excellent emergent writing and reading activity as the children will see that the words have meaning. (Literacy)



I love my mom because

She gives me cuddles
She cooks nice food

I wanted to extend this activity, so I chose a paint technique to paint the centre heart and added a drawing activity around the heart.

Themes: Valentine's Day, Colour red, Shapes - heart

Ages: 4 – 5 ½ year olds

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

Materials:

- Cardboard heart – use the same template to draw the heart on the A4 paper
- Paint – red, white and pink – thick and paint brushes
- Wooden sucker sticks
- Something to draw with - Koki pens, wax crayons, or pencil crayons
- A4 paper with a traced heart shape with a small circle in the centre (see photo)
- Cardboard strips about 1 cm wide
- Glue and glue brushes
- Spare paper to go under the heart while painting



Teacher: Prepare the cardboard hearts and trace the heart onto the paper adding a small circle to the centre. Cut the red cardboard into strips.

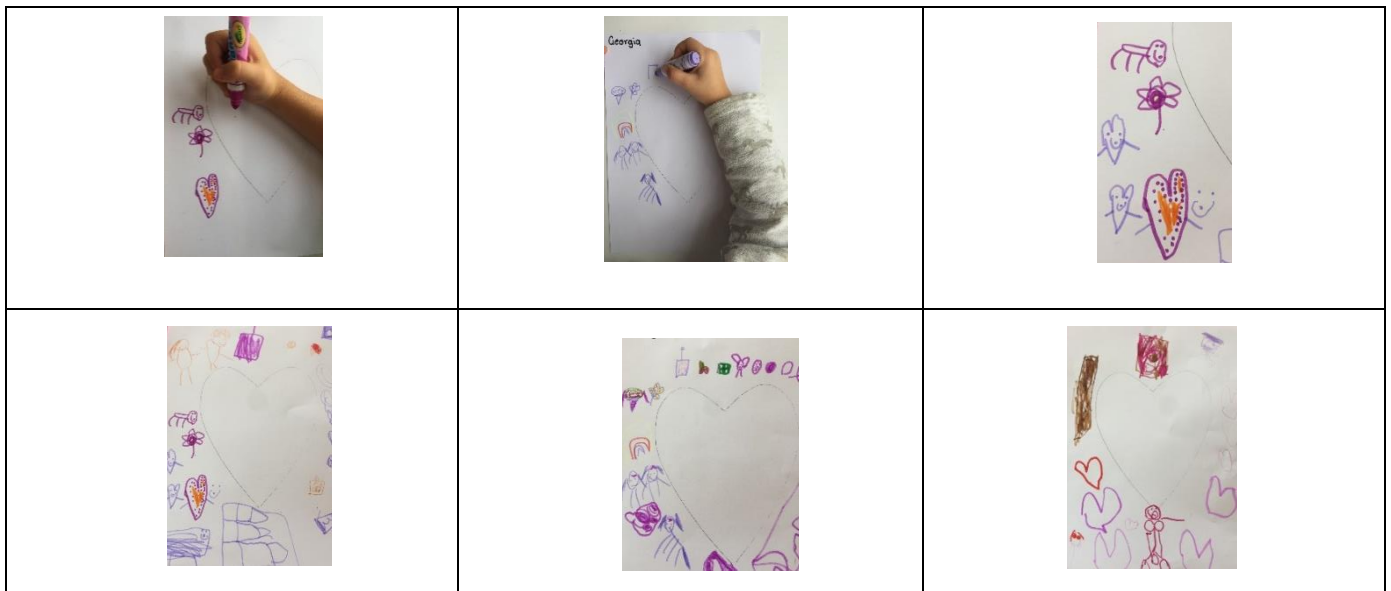
Child:

Drawing: The child draws pictures of things they love about their mom around the traced heart leaving the heart outline open to paste the painted heart later.

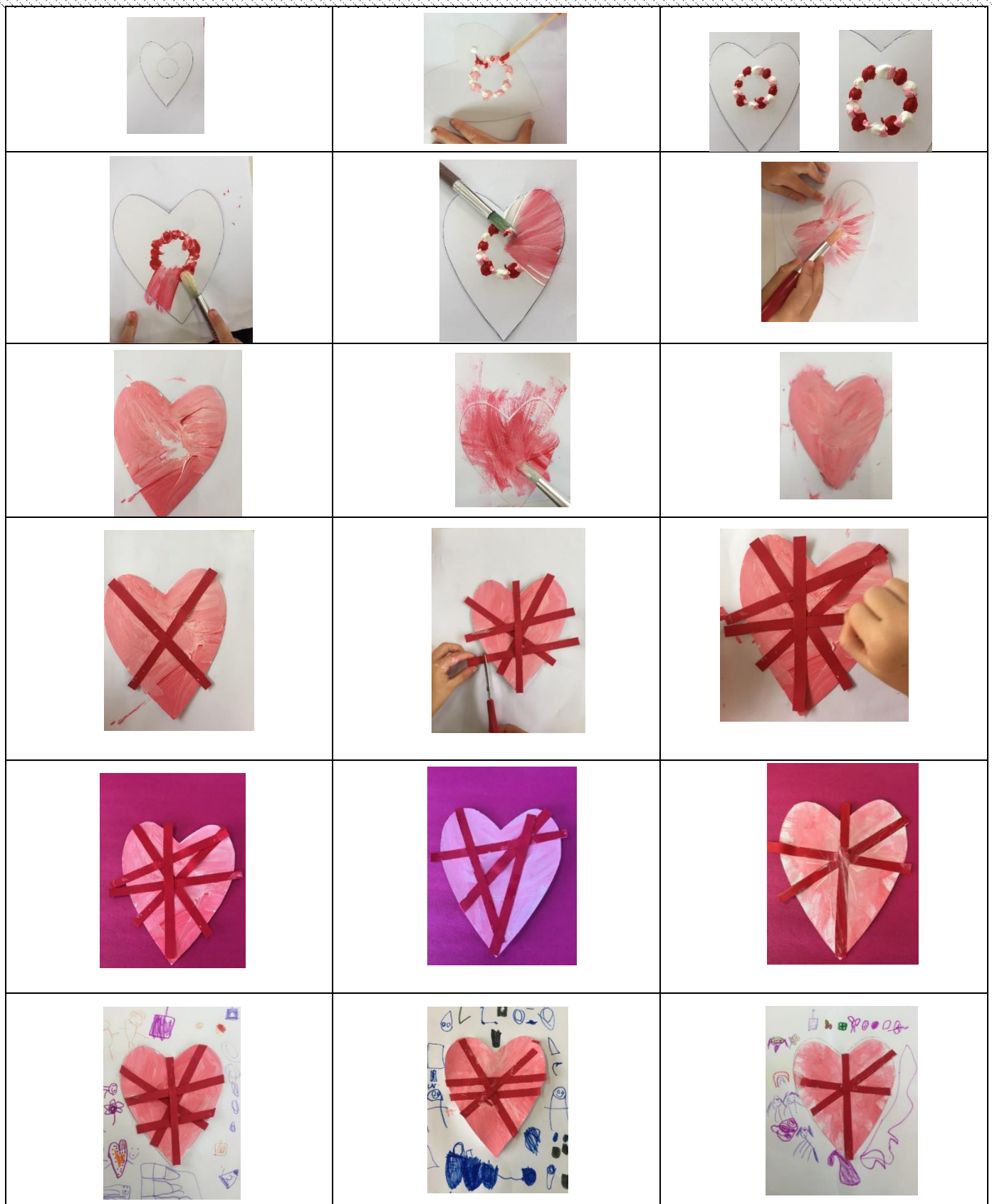
Heart: The child dabs blobs of paint around the circle in the heart using the sucker sticks. Once the circle is filled with blobs the child paints the stripes using a paint brush. The child paints the blobs from the centre to the edge of the heart filling in the whole heart with paint. **Note:** This was not as effective as I had hoped so you can just do blobs all over the heart and paint the heart blending the colours. No need for the circle if you do this.

The child pastes strips of red cardboard randomly over the heart cutting off any excess pieces.

The child puts glue on the back of the heart and pastes the painted heart onto the paper with the traced heart.



Painting process



Notes:

- This activity was enjoyed by all the children.
- It can be done over two days.

Note: This activity can be changed to work for a theme on shapes by working with another shape such as a square. Instead of drawing things they love, the children draw square things such as a box, a block, a house

Heart shaped baskets from paper plates with a love note drawing for Mother's Day

Theme: Colour red

Other themes: Valentine's day, Shapes – heart, My family – mother, Mother's Day

Ages: 3 ½ - 5-year-olds

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

Materials:

- Paper plates – 2 per child
- Paint – red and white on a flat container
- Sponge paint brushes – see picture
- Glue and glue brushes
- Ribbon – for the handle
- Paper and crayons
- Collage materials – sparkly jewels, glitter, punched hearts

Teacher: Stapler and/or cello tape



Teachers note: Fold the paper plates in half before the children paint them. Prepare the sponge paint brushes.

Method:

The children paint the underside of two paper plates using the sponges and red and white paint blending it to create a pink red. Once dry the teacher staples two folded plates in a heart shape (see picture). The children decorate their hearts using the collage material. The children draw or write a note on heart shaped paper to go inside the bag or to paste to the front of the heart. Teacher attaches some ribbon for a handle using a stapler or cello tape.



Notes:

- Small or large paper plates can be used
- Any method can be used to paint the paper plates
- It is best to let the paper plates dry before adding the collage materials
- Florist ribbon is best for the handle and needs to be stapled on or use cello tape. Glue is not effective.

Theme: Colours

Cellophane collage on a foil background with drawing

Other themes: Five senses, Shapes,

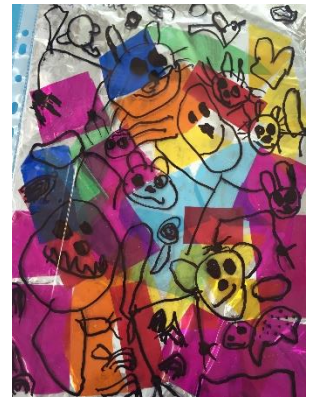
Any theme according to the drawing request (flowers, my family, myself, pets)

Ages: 3 - 5-year-olds (3-year-olds will scribble their picture which is age appropriate)

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

Materials:

- A 4 cardboard
- Foil to cover the cardboard
- Glue and glue brushes
- Plastic filing sleeves
- Black or blue permanent marking pens
- Cellophane – coloured and cut into smaller pieces



Teachers note: Cut the foil a bit larger than the cardboard. Cut the cellophane into smaller pieces or shapes such as leaves.

Method:

The children cover the cardboard with the foil shiny side out. They fold the foil over the sides and press flat. No need to secure it. The children apply some glue to an area and cover it with cellophane pieces overlapping them so there is not much foil exposed. Continue until most of the foil is covered with cellophane. The teacher slides the foil covered cardboard into a plastic sleeve and flattens the picture. Using a black Koki pen, the children draw a picture of their choice on the plastic sleeve with the coloured area behind the line drawing.



Notes:

- Some children did not fold the foil accurately on the edges which made it a bit difficult to slide into the plastic sleeve as it was a tad too big
- The Koki pen or marking pen must be a permanent one otherwise it just rubs off the plastic
- If you don't have pens and plastic sleeves, you can draw directly on the cellophane collage once it is dry
- Some children used a lot of glue and did not place the cellophane pieces close enough



Theme: Five sense

Bubble wrap printing for background for the cupcake activity

Other themes: Bubbles, Shape – circles, Five senses - texture

Ages: 3 - 5-year-olds

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

Materials:

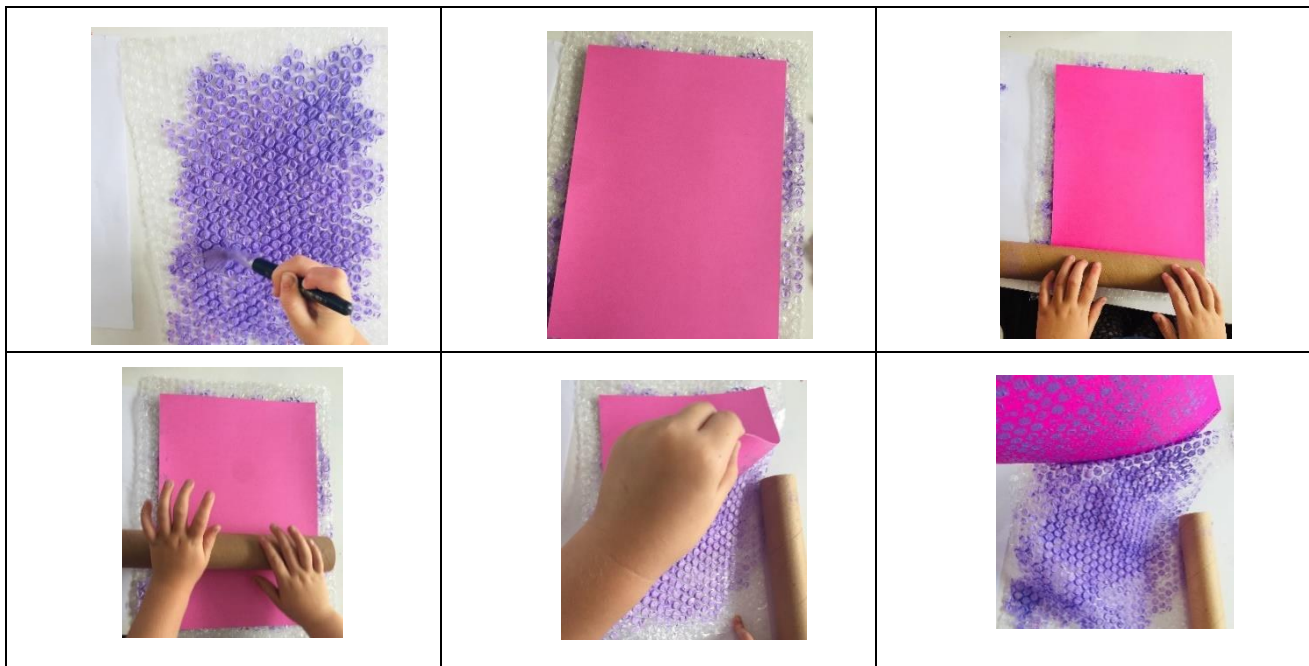
- Bubble wrap – slightly bigger than A4 per child
- Paint – one colour
- Paint brushes – thick
- Paper or cardboard depending on the activity
- Cardboard inner tubes – firm



Teachers note: Cut the bubble wrap a bit bigger than A4. One per child.

Method:

The children paint the bubble side of the bubble wrap with a good layer of paint. Too little and you don't get a print – too much and the bubbles merge. The painted area does not need to go right to the edge. The children place a piece of paper or cardboard onto the painted bubble wrap. Using the cardboard roller the children roll over the paper a few times applying some pressure. The children lift the paper to reveal the print.



Notes:

- Medium sized bubble wrap works best
- The children do not have to paint right to the edges
- The roller must be made of firm cardboard to be effective. If you don't have rollers they can use their hands and give it a good rub
- The painted bubble wrap can be used as a background for another activity or cut for collage material when dry

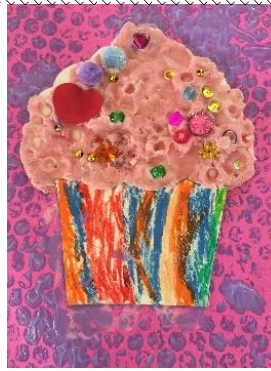
Theme: Five Senses

Cupcakes with playdough on cardboard with a bubble wrap printed background

Other themes: Baker, Food, Birthdays, Home

Ages: 3 - 5-year-olds

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



Materials:

- Cupcake cups and icing tops – made with cardboard
- Playdough – colour of your choice – 2 cups of flour quantity is sufficient for 8 children
- Glue and glue brushes
- Pastels – or anything to draw with
- Collage items – beads, buttons, sequins, pompoms and shiny items
- Small seed beads for 'sprinkles'



Teachers note: Prepare a cardboard cupcake base and the icing top for each child. It needs to be firm cardboard such as a cereal box. Cut the bubble wrap to size. Make playdough and divide it into about 80 gr portions so you have enough for all the children.

Method:

The children colour in the cupcake base. The children put some glue on the icing cardboard and pinch off pieces of playdough and press them onto the cardboard until the area is filled. Using the collage materials, the children firmly press the beads etc into the playdough to decorate the cupcake. Small seed beads can be added for sprinkles. Make sure the collage materials are pushed into the playdough and pompoms and buttons are glued. A button makes a fun cherry on the top. The children paste the cupcake to the bubble printed background using a good amount of glue and matching the icing top to the cupcake case bottom. Dry flat.



Notes:

- If you don't have beads use rice, small pieces of coloured cardboard, coloured crushed eggshells
- Some children did not place the icing over the cupcake leaving a gap
- Ration the playdough so you are sure there is enough. Encourage the children to spread their playdough



