

Preschool Themes Newsletter – August 2015

Hello Everyone,

I am home after a lovely holiday overseas. I trust you had a good break for the July holidays too. We had some very hot weather with temperatures rising up to 44 Deg C. These were some of the highest temperatures recorded in a long time. While we enjoyed the warmth we found that kind of heat overwhelming. Sadly it's back to one of the coldest winters on record in NZ and we arrived home to 12 deg C.☹

While overseas I was once again reminded how frustrating it is not to understand the language you are hearing and reading. Trying to decipher a menu written all in Spanish when you are gluten free was even more challenging and very few people spoke English. But despite the language barrier we managed to communicate through sign language and hand gestures. It made me think of all the children in your school whose home language is not the language of instruction and how frustrated, anxious and confused they must feel at times. I was also very aware of the need for signs and symbols alongside the written word such as a toilet sign. Just a thought to bear in mind when you have children in your group who speak a different language at home to speak slowly, keep your language simple and use pictures with the written word.

Preschool themes Facebook page

I am so excited that the likes on the preschool themes Facebook page have reached over 1000. Thank you so much for your support. It's a great way to communicate and share ideas and needs.

www.facebook.com/preschoolthemes.

Art activities

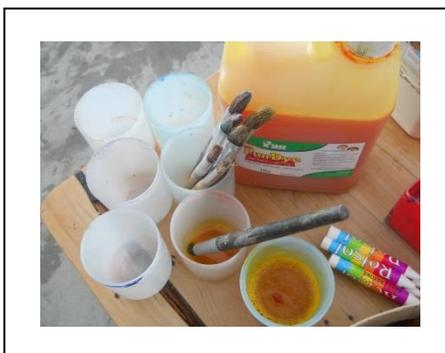
Wax resist or magic painting

Wax resist is a basic art process used in preschools which I am sure many of you are familiar with. The children really enjoy using diluted food colouring to paint over wax crayon or pastel drawings. The wax resists the paint. If you draw with white wax crayons the food colouring causes the white wax crayon to show up and it appears "like magic" hence the name magic painting.

This process can be repeated often in preschool as the children master the process. To keep it interesting (and to use those white wax crayons!) you can change the shape of the paper and the colour of the crayons you are using.

We needed some stars at school so I cut out stars for the children and they coloured them with wax crayons including white. I diluted some food colouring or preschool dye and the children painted over the drawings. They loved seeing the colours show up.

This then extended into drawing secret magic pictures for their friends using white wax crayons and then painting over to see what their friend had drawn for them.



Notes:

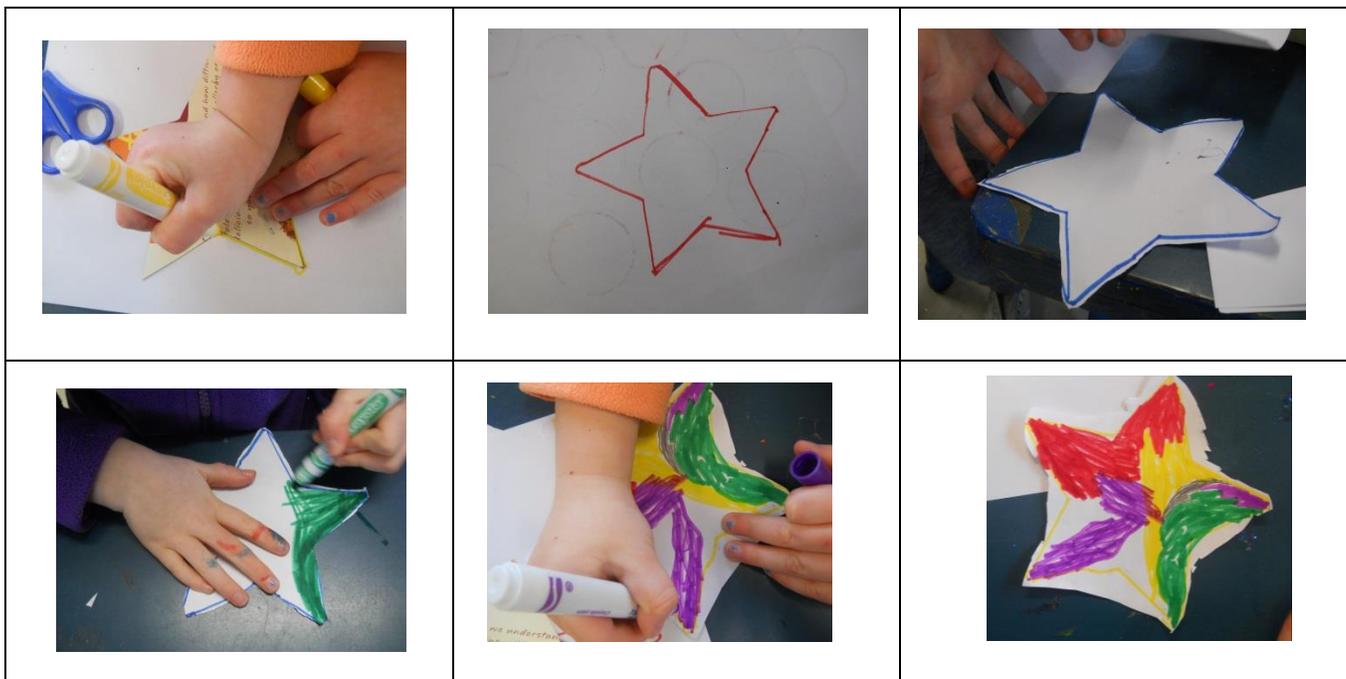
- The paper was too thin and we got holes in our art works so use light weight cardboard if you can
- Check the intensity of the food colouring before you use it
- Only put a little food colouring in each container as it can get tipped over



Extension: Tracing shapes

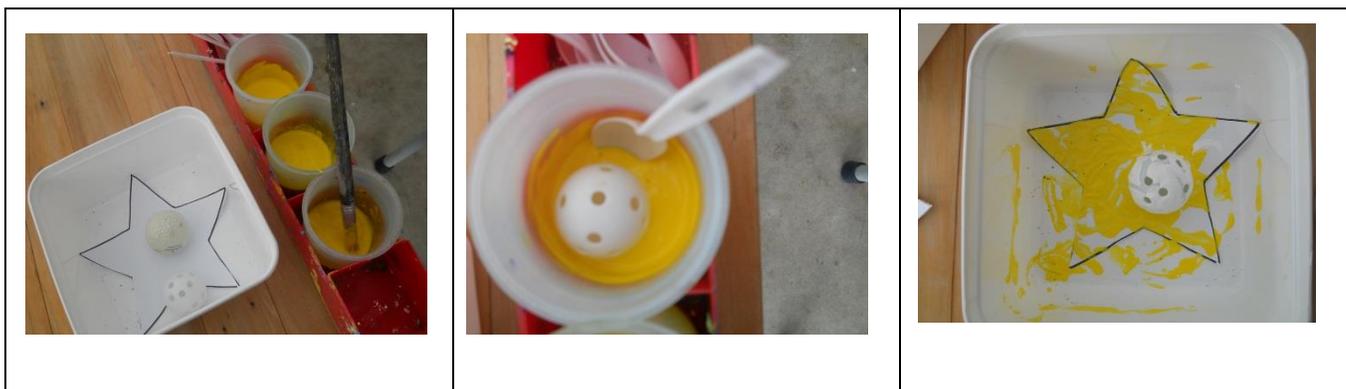
The children observed me tracing the stars for the above activity and wanted to do it themselves. I left the star templates in the open art area and many children over several days enjoyed tracing the stars and creating their own art works.

Tracing around cardboard templates is a tricky skill for most children so don't expect the children to do this with ease or accuracy but they do feel very "important" when they use the teachers templates and even more so when you allow them to use your black koki pen! TIP: I cut my templates from cereal boxes



Golf ball painting

We used the star shape which we painted with golf balls. I cut out the star shape and the children dropped golf balls (Plastic or solid ones, but solid ones are better or use marbles) dipped in paint onto the star, rolled the ball around the container covering the stars with paint. Once the paint was used up, the golf ball was returned to the paint and the process repeated.



Notes

- You must use poster paint (fairly thin) and not ready mixed paint. It's too thick and sticky
- I used plastic practice golf balls but the heavy solid ones are much better

- I used 2 litre plastic containers for the shapes but any cardboard box or lid will work too.
- You can vary this activity over the year by changing the shapes, the colour of the paint and what you roll around E.g acorns on leaf shapes for autumn

Painted bags



I was given quite a lot of some felt like fabric and I pondered over what I could do with it. I decided to make some bags for the children to paint. Since this was a bit of a last minute decision, I had not really thought through how I would create the bags. We do have a sewing machine at school which the children use with the assistance of the teacher, but it takes rather long and since it's a cheap machine the bobbin keeps getting tangled. (And I keep getting frustrated!) Ideally I should have sewed them ahead of time on my machine.

I tried to sew through the felt with a large needle and thread thinking this could be a great fine motor activity for the children, but it was much too difficult to get through the felt so that plan was

abandoned. Glue didn't do the trick either.

Eventually I decided to staple them together but that proved to be rather frustrating too as the staples didn't always go through the fabric. I eventually fetched the bigger long armed stapler and that did the trick. Talk about persevering. It was worth it in the end as the children absolutely loved their bags and many children participated including the boys.



For this activity you need

Fabric – felt or thick interfacing Vilene will work well

Paint

Stapler and staples

Optional but really essential of course – glitter! A bag without a bit of bling is not okay. You could do this with cardboard too.

Making the bag

I just cut a long rectangle and folded it in half and stapled the sides. I added a strip for the handle. No pattern or measuring.

The children painted their bags using thick ready mixed poster paint. Some chose to paint their handles and the back of their bags. Once dried, they painted on glue and

sprinkled on glitter ... and as usual more glitter.

Extension:

The children wrote grocery lists to place in their shopping bags. Amelia decided she needed a picture of 'Elsa' from the frozen movie. The children are absolutely crazy about the movie and the song. This is such a lovely example of some emergent writing. Amelia is off to big school in the next two months so this writing shows she is ready for formal writing.

Earlier in the week we had done a collage activity with paper hearts so the girls asked for some paper hearts to paste to their bags with all the glitter. Amelia decided to paint rows of patterns. You can integrate maths patterning with your art by asking the children to create patterns.

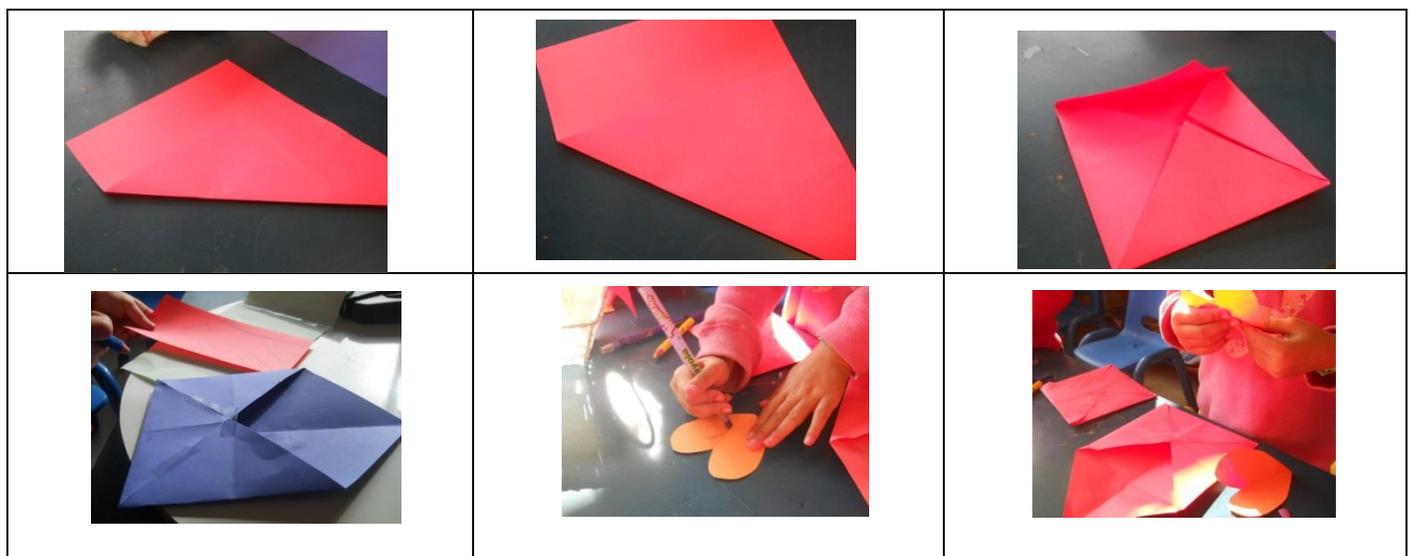


Some examples of the lovely bags - note the levels of "pictures". Our younger children enjoyed just painting with lovely colours.



Letters and envelopes

The children needed "stuff" in their bags so while some made grocery lists I showed the others how to create an envelope and letter to put inside the envelope. To make an envelope make a square and fold it into quarters as triangles if that makes sense. Tape the edges together. All great for fine motor skills and an opportunity to pretend write.



Happy teaching

Regards
Karin