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Preschool Themes Newsletter – January 2015

Hello Everyone,

A Happy New Year to you and your families. I hope this is a great year for you all. Welcome to the new subscribers and welcome back to the regular members. I love the start of a new year with a clean slate, tidy classroom, new equipment and lots of enthusiasm and fresh ideas to implement. It's also a really good time to take a few moments to reflect on the past year and think about areas and activities that were successful and those that may need to be changed.

I have not been at school in December nor will I be there in January as I am a part time teacher so I don't have any art activities to share with you, but I will share some good ideas and thoughts for the New Year with you. I have also attached two other documents – home-made paint recipes and should food be used in creative activities.



Pinterest boards

I keep harping on about the pinterest boards but honestly I don't know how I lived without them! There are so many amazing ideas to use with the theme books. I have created a board for each theme, general teaching boards and boards for themes I have not written yet. Between all the preschool theme boards there are my personal boards (mainly Christmas for a big Christmas festival I belong to) which have some great ideas too.

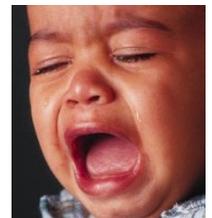
This is the general link <http://www.pinterest.com/kstedall/> and each board has its own link. You can copy ideas from my boards to yours. I find them so valuable when I am planning a new theme or looking for a quick and fun idea to do with the children at school. I really urge you to take some time to look at the ideas and to follow the boards so any new ideas I post will come on your main page. I have a Grade R board with specific ideas suited to the grade R classrooms and likewise a toddler board. If you are unsure of how to use the Pinterest boards you are more than welcome to contact me and I can guide you. rodandkarin@xtra.co.nz

<http://www.pinterest.com/kstedall/>

First week of school

The first week of school can be very stressful for children, parents and teachers. To ensure you have a calm and stress free week I would like to suggest the following:

1. Be well prepared.
2. Set out activities for the children to do. This gives the children and parents something to go to and be distracted and allows the parents to leave with their children involved and happy. Keep these simple but stimulating. They should not need much teacher supervision
3. Be available to talk to the children and parents when they arrive at school.
4. Accept that some children will be tearful (and parents if it's the first time they are leaving their children) so be supportive and sympathetic.
5. Although you do need to set boundaries early in the year, allow the children a few days to settle in and orientate themselves before you start becoming a grouch! It is vital that the rules and boundaries are established early but week 1 is probably not the best time to do this.
6. Assure parents you will call them if their crying child does not settle.
7. Make a poster for the classroom door that says " A quick goodbye helps me not to cry" . When parents linger it makes an upset child worse so encourage parents to say good bye and to leave. And not pop back to check!!
8. Discourage parents from standing around where the child can see them after they have said goodbye.
9. Never let parents sneak away without saying goodbye to their child. It makes them very insecure.
10. Write the time the parent will collect the child on their hand if they are very insecure.
11. Children who cry and fuss in the first week usually settle down soon. Children who start crying in the 2nd week take a lot longer to settle (generalisation)
12. If all else fails take lots of deep breaths. It will get better as the term progresses
13. Go to bed early..... be rested.



Creative activities

Painting and printing – with direction or free painting – is a very valuable preschool activity that teaches and provides opportunity for many skills to be practiced. Ideally a painting activity should be set out daily along with other creative activities. Apart from the paint, this does not need to be an expensive activity. You can even make your own paint if finances are very limited.

Home-made paint recipes



<http://www.learnplayimagine.com/2013/08/homemade-paint-recipes.html>

I have copied three recipes for you which I have attached as a separate document

Painting on newspaper



We sometimes forget that newspaper can be used for painting on, especially since paper is expensive and children like to make many paintings. The bigger size paper is useful, but do mix your paints slightly thicker if you are using powder paints as it's very absorbent. It's also good to change the level that the children paint at such as on the floor, at the table and on an easel. Using a variety of different things to paint with changes a basic painting activity into something new and different. I have a painting pinterest board with some good ideas.

<http://www.pinterest.com/kstedall/painting/>

Here are a few ideas to get you thinking

 <p>Painting with dough cutters</p>	 <p>Painting in a shape using a peg and cotton wool</p>	 <p>Painting/printing with vegetable net bags</p>
 <p>Painting branches</p>	 <p>Painting with water colour paints using thinner brushes and shapes</p>	 <p>Painting with ribbon or string</p>
 <p>Painting with tin cans</p>	 <p>Painting with pegs and pom poms but sponges will be as effective (Hint: cut dishwashing sponges into smaller pieces)</p>	 <p>Painting with leaves, branches or herbs</p>

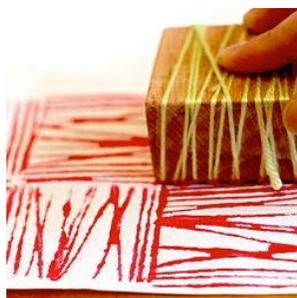
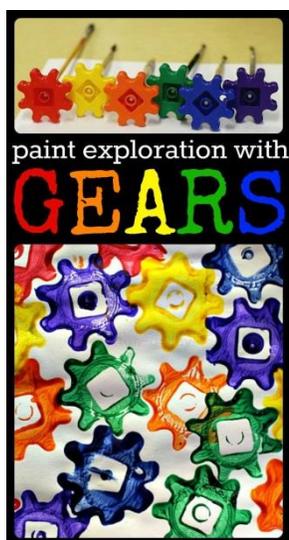
Homemade paint brushes



<http://www.tutusteaparties.com/2014/01/painting-without-brushes-over-50-ideas.html#more>

Painting and printing with equipment intended for other purposes

I often look around the classroom and find interesting items to print and paint with. Here are a few ideas



Cutting activities



Googly eyes help children know which way to hold the scissors(poor picture sorry)



Glue: Do you hate washing the glue pots? I do. I saw an excellent idea at a school. Place a disposable plastic or paper cup into your glue pot holder so it's secure but then you just dispose of the cup when you are done. No more washing and it's inexpensive.

Some interesting articles on art and encouragement – taken from pinterest

This will make a good classroom poster.



A R T

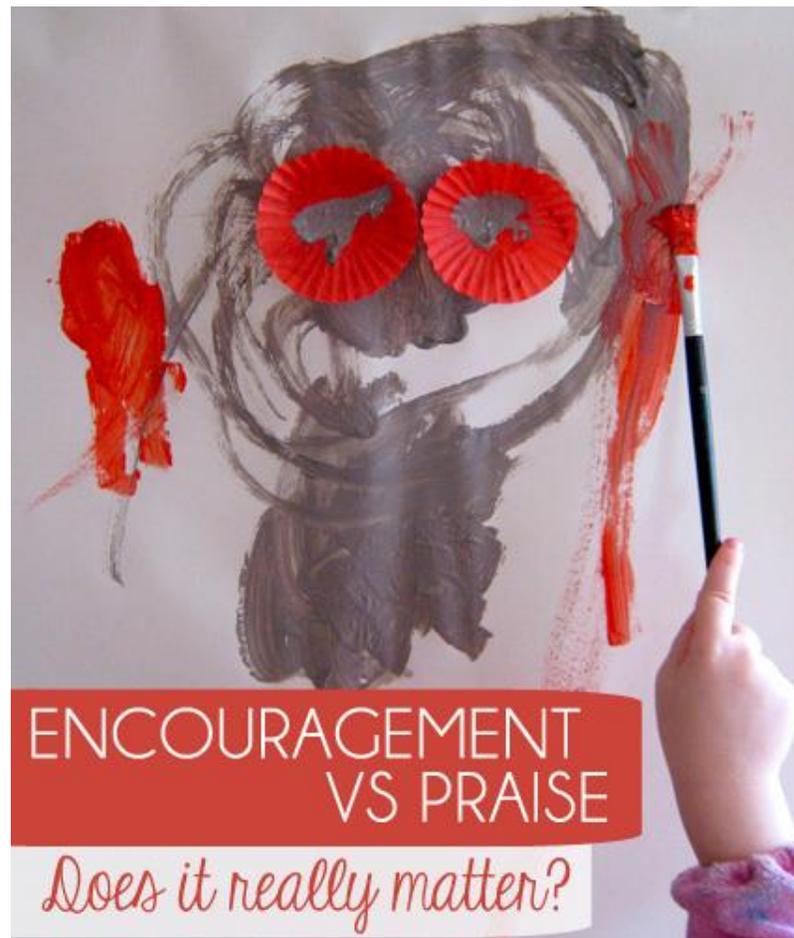
"Art for toddlers and preschoolers is rarely about beauty. It's all about exploration and personal expression."

- Heather Shumaker

<http://notjustcute.com/2014/06/04/its-ok-not-to-share-section-5-creativity-persistence-and-empty-praise/>

- Art for toddlers and pre-schoolers is rarely about beauty. It's all about exploration and personal expression.
- For kids, there is little difference between art and science.
- Crafts are not the same as art, and they should make up a small percentage of a child's experience with art materials.
- Some kids who don't seem to "buy in" to art activities will respond better to action art or other art projects that incorporate large motor movements. Have you witnessed this with your own kids or classrooms?
- All teachers have different tolerances for mess. What's YOUR comfort zone?
- Acknowledgement is better than praise. Inner satisfaction is better than outside approval." (pg. 286)
- Encourage a "growth mind-set" and use descriptive praise that emphasizes the process rather than judgmental praise that reflects only on the product.
- Avoid generic praise like "Good Job". What's your hardest praise habit to break?

Talking to Kids: Encouragement vs Praise



This post was first published in August 2009.

By Definition;

praise (prz), n.

1. Expression of approval, commendation, or admiration.
2. The extolling or exaltation of a deity, ruler, or hero.
3. Archaic A reason for praise; merit.

en·cour·age (n-kûrj, -kr-)

1. To inspire with hope, courage, or confidence; hearten.
2. To give support to; foster.
3. To stimulate; spur.

~ *The Free Dictionary*

I believe the very definition of 'encourage' epitomises the roles of parenting and teaching – inspire, courage, confidence, and support, foster, stimulate, and spur on. Contrast this with the words defining praise – approval, admiration, exalt, extol.

Whilst there is obviously a place for each when spending time with children, the difference is that **encouragement acknowledges effort, the process and celebrates success** whilst praise makes a judgment and is about giving a child your approval of their actions.

Compare, "That is a beautiful painting," with, "What bright colours you've chosen. What do you like most about your painting?"

It is more useful to say to the child, "Thanks for letting Joe play – it really cheered him up," than, "You're a nice girl."

It is important that we try to encourage and acknowledge much more regularly than we praise;

- Practise giving your child more specific feedback.
- Encourage their efforts, acknowledging successes *and* failures.
- Focus encouragement on the learning process and their learning style rather than the final outcome.

You will find an excellent article from the New York Magazine about the inverse power of praise, including interesting results of recent research here: [How Not to Talk to Your Kids: The Inverse Power of Praise By Po Bronson](http://childhood101.com/2012/04/encouragement-vs-praise/#_a5y_p=1699953)

- See more at: http://childhood101.com/2012/04/encouragement-vs-praise/#_a5y_p=1699953

Happy teaching in 2105

If you need help or have queries I am always happy to try and help you.

Regards
Karin

