

## Preschool Themes Newsletter – July/August 2016

Hello Everyone,

Welcome back to school. I trust you all had a good break and you are energised for the new term. I have been off school for the past few weeks looking after my 4 year old granddaughter. While she stayed with me, I took her to play centre which are community run play groups. The parents stay with the children and spend time playing with them while a play centre supervisor sets out some special activities each day. Since I have not been at school much I thought I would show you a few of the activities they set out.



### Fantasy play

Eve my granddaughter loves to play with dolls and I enjoyed watching her role play in the family area. I was amused when she told me "the baby has pooped on all her clothes" so she put all the dolls clothes in the fantasy area washing machine. She fed her baby, laid her high chair with a knife and fork, then put her baby to bed even kissing her good night and wished her "sweet dreams". Then she did some ironing and took the baby for a walk. Have you noticed how often the children play with the dolls undressed? There were plenty of clothes to dress the dolly but even at school the children very often play with the undressed dolls.

Don't undervalue the learning that takes place in the fantasy area. All areas of child development are practiced in the fantasy area. This is also an easy area to create even with limited finances as much of it can be second hand items from the families. Remember to change the area fairly often to keep interest. Be aware of cluttering this area by putting out too many resources. It overwhelms the area and limits constructive play and makes tidy up time stressful. If you have limited space much of this area can be set out in the outdoor area or on the veranda.



### Outdoor mud kitchen



There was more pretend play outdoors in the mud kitchen. Although it said it was a mud kitchen it was mainly pretend cooking with water. This is an easy area to create and equip with second hand items and being outside the children can really get involved.





### Sand tray play

Many of you are unable to have a sandpit in the ground at your centre. Sand trays are a good substitute and often can double as a water tray too. A large flat plastic container on a table makes an inexpensive and effective lay station which can be filled with many different sensory materials.

This sand tray was filled with sawdust and small smooth pebbles. Tractors with trailers added interest. Eve spent a long time collecting the stones and loading them onto the trailer. A very simple activity which kept boys and girls happily occupied while developing many skills. Adding scoops and plastic cups would be great idea.



### Dinosaur sand tray play

The sand tray was placed on a table and filled with sandpit sand, dinosaurs, insects and a few other animals. Natural items such as logs, wood slices and shells were added for interest. One negative of this sand tray is that the sand tends to get spilled so place the tray in an area where it is easy to clean up the sand. Make sure the children know the rules for this area and supervise. You will need to sweep up some spilled sand.



### Toasting marshmallows

The children helped the teacher collect some twigs and together they made a fire in the sandpit. The children were given wire forks and marshmallows to toast over the fire. This activity needs very close and careful supervision but the children really enjoyed the experience. I know some of you may be shaking your heads at this activity and I can understand why so please use your discretion as to whether this activity is suitable to do at your centre. Perhaps the children could do this in small groups of children at a time while the others are occupied indoors.



## Art activities

### Dry powder paint painting

At our school where I teach the teachers almost always put out ready mixed liquid paint for the children to use, so dry powder paint is quite a new experience for the children. For this activity I placed dry powder paint in a flat container with teaspoons. The children sprinkled different colours of dry paint on a piece of paper and then dipped the paint brush in water and painted over the dry paint causing the paint to then become liquid and spread. We got some lovely mixed colours appearing on the paper.

For Grade R children you can use this painting time to draw and create writing patterns in the paint using a paint brush or their fingers. I encouraged the children to paint/draw faces in the painting they had created.



## Painting on wax paper and taking a print

I found this idea on Pinterest at the link below.

<http://www.cuttingtinybites.com/2016/06/wax-paper-printmaking-painting-process-art-kids.html>

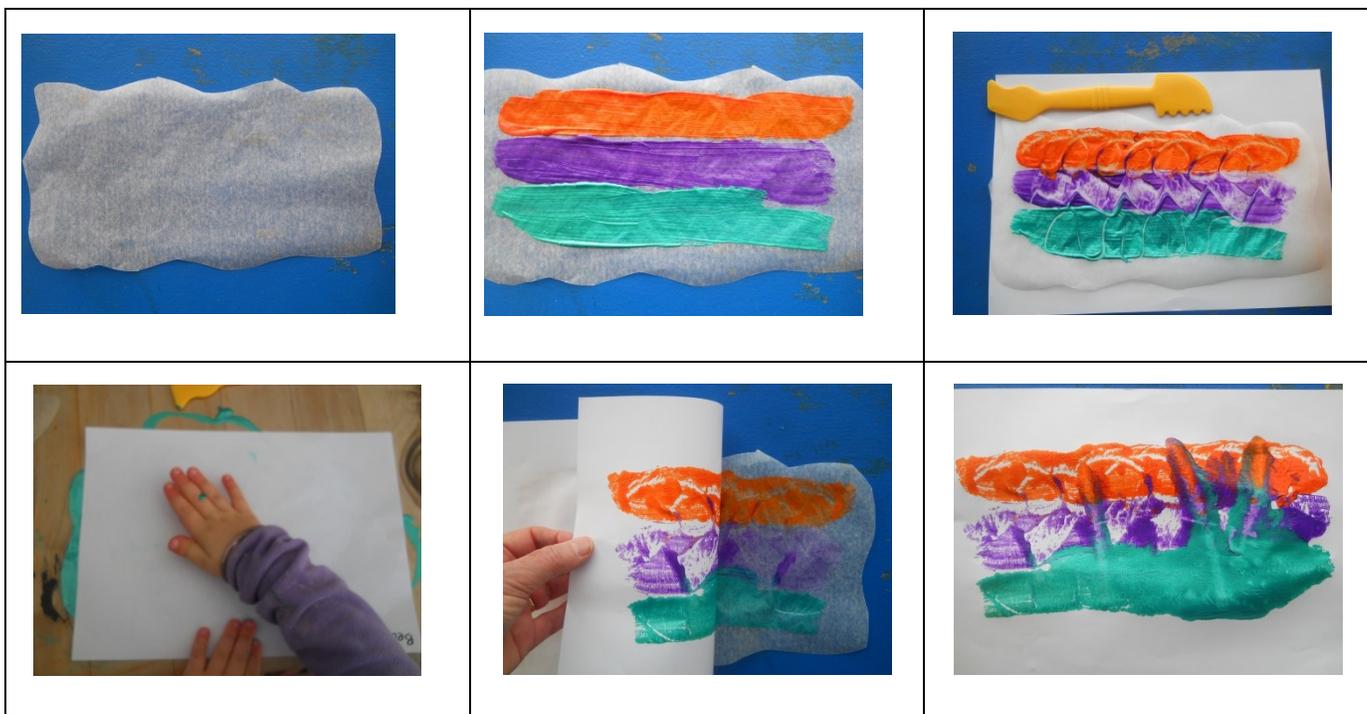
For this activity I cut some pieces of wax wrap and cut the edge in a pattern. Make sure the size of the wax paper is smaller than the A paper you will use to take the print. I set out three colours of ready mixed paint and some play dough tools to use for the drawing part.

The children painted on the waxy side of the wax paper. Some chose to draw patterns and pictures in the paint using the play dough tools. Wooden sucker sticks will work well too. Then they placed the white paper onto the wax paper painting, rubbed all over the paper with the flat of their hand and then peeled off the wax paper to see their print.

**Notes:** Some of the younger children (3 1/2 y) preferred to just paint and use the tools to spread the paint and make patterns rather than print.



The wax paper paintings are hard to carry. I placed a blob of paint on each corner and pasted it to white paper as an extra art work.



## Some variations on this technique



## A few ideas

### Fire themed counting activity

Unfortunately I don't know the source of these images. The children matched up the number of firemen to the numeral on the fire truck.



### Shakers or investigation lids

I saw this idea and thought wow what a clever idea. The lids are from the Moccona coffee jars. They have a plastic part that seals the lid in the bottle (if this makes sense). So using a knife or scissors remove the plastic part of the lid, fill with a variety of items and replace the plastic part to the lid. It is really difficult to get off without using some scissors or a screw driver so it is quite unlikely that a child will get it off.

I know it's made of glass but it's a very thick glass and I would be surprised if it broke unless of course it's physically thrown against a wall!



A wide variety of items can be placed in the lids if you are making shaker: Mealies, pegs, small stones, rice etc

As part of the science table you can put in seeds, shells, soil etc

Happy teaching  
Regards  
Karin