

Preschool Themes Newsletter – June 2018

Hello Everyone,

Here we are in the middle of the year already. This year is just flying past for me. June brings us Father's day so I have included a separate attachment with some ideas for you. There is also a Pinterest board with many other ideas too.

<https://www.pinterest.nz/kstedall/fathers-day/>

I had the opportunity to implement some loose parts play at school so I am sharing some of the results. Without organised opportunities for loose parts play, children will create games with loose parts play in their free play. I left a puzzle out last week which is something I generally don't do as I like to supervise puzzle building time. When I looked again all the pieces had been put into a tea pot and the balance were on plates in the pretend oven. I was upset that my puzzle was not being respected and of course the pieces get lost but the children had instinctively used them as loose parts for their fantasy play. Open ended play is very much a natural way of playing for children and if we don't provide opportunities for loose parts play they will create their own opportunities.

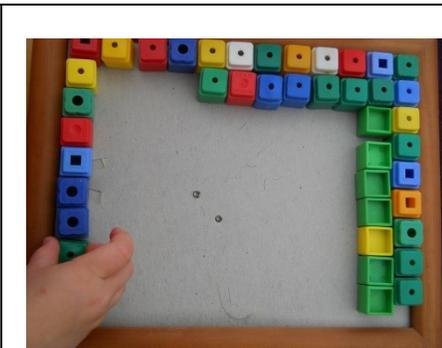
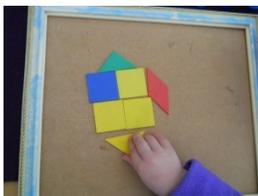
I am still having some hiccups with sending out the newsletters so if you don't receive one please either e mail me (rodandkarin@xtra.co.nz) or all the archived newsletters can be found on the web site www.preschoolthemes.co.za

Happy Father's day to all the dads out there, we appreciate all you do for us.



Loose parts play in action

In the March newsletter, which can be accessed through the web site www.preschoolthemes.co.za under the newsletter tab, I discussed the idea of loose parts play. I finally had a chance to set it out at school with the 3 ½ year olds to 4 ½ year olds. I managed to get a whole lot of picture frames from someone who was giving them away and I removed the glass but left the cardboard backing in the frame. I set out milk lids, touch and count cubes, bigger lids and some plastic logishapes. In retrospect the logishapes were not a good idea as children generally use these to create pictures instead of just enjoying playing with the shapes. This influenced what they did with the materials. Instead of it being free play some children made pictures.





This photo to the right has been done by the same child I discussed in the May newsletter who shows excessive behaviours. This lack of planning or any sort of system in the use of materials is a red flag for me and is very much indicative of how she approaches most activities. Having said that the idea of loose parts play is that the children choose how they want to use the materials with no teacher direction or a right or wrong way of using the materials so perhaps I should not be using this as an observation opportunity! But I can't help but notice how random her arrangement was versus the orderly arrangement of the other children. I might add that it's not an age difference either.



I often look at the children and wonder what jobs the children will do in their adult years. Looking at the child who systematically filled the whole frame with the touch and count cubes makes me wonder if she will work in a job that requires systems? Or the child who loves to play with the dolls and take care of them – will they end up in a nurturing profession. I so wish I could follow them into adulthood.

Creative activities

Rain with clouds and syringe painting

We were given a whole lot of expired syringes from one of our parents at school so I looked for an activity to do with them. Children LOVE syringes (and they love to be naughty with them too!) so I knew this art activity would be a real hit especially with the boys. Ideally this activity needs to be done on a vertical art easel which most of you probably don't have. We have a small one on the fence at school but I had way more children wanting to do this activity than there was space on the easel. So I pegged the paper to the fence and it worked well. I would highly recommend you do this activity outside as the colouring does drip down off the paper. I have some large pieces of felt like fabric that I use to cover the tables so I used that below the painting but an old sheet or newspaper could work but that may blow in the wind if outside.



The children managed really well with a few struggling to release small amounts of dye at the top of the page ending up with some big splats and blobs of colouring. A few also ended up colouring the clouds instead of starting at the line. Larger sheets of paper work better and a slightly shiny surface helps the colour run more easily. Test your paper and colouring before offering the activity to the children.



If you don't have access to syringes then you can use pipettes. Syringes can be purchased inexpensively from the chemist. (Sorry it was hard to get good photos for this activity)

Theme: Water - Rain

Other themes: Weather, Clouds, Up in the sky

Ages: 3 1/2 - 5 year olds

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

Materials:

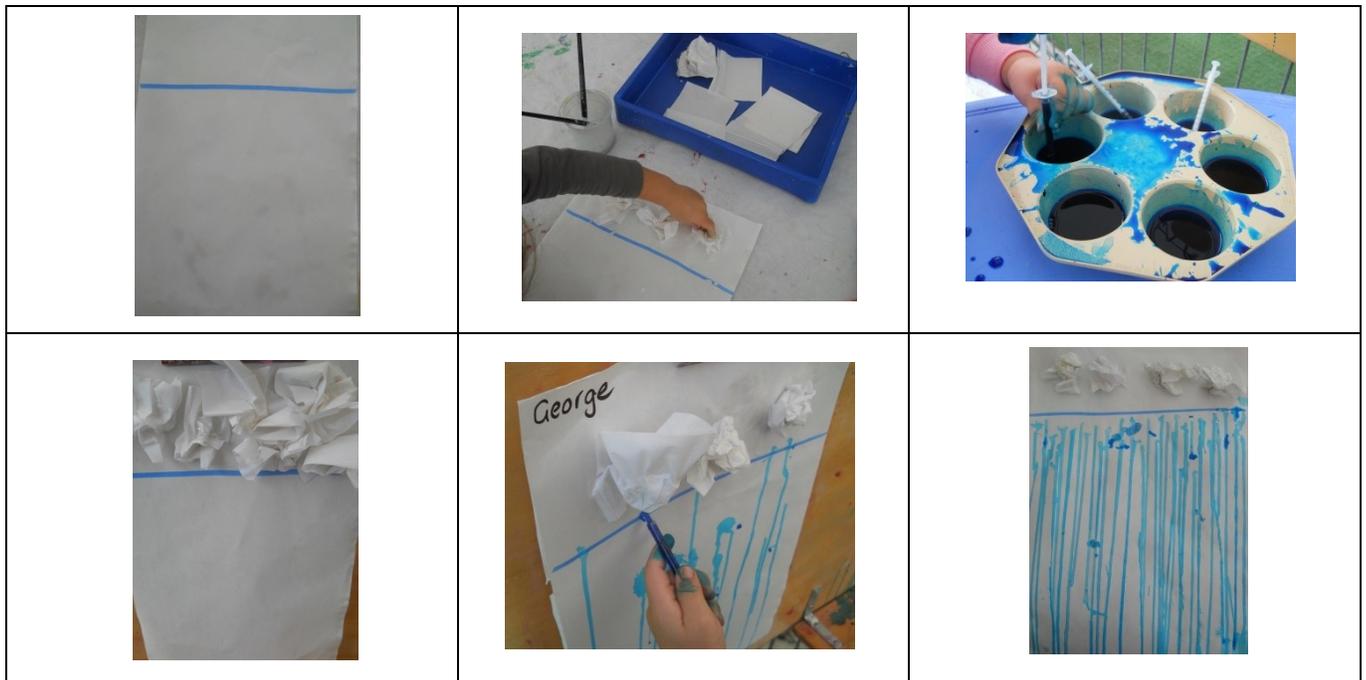
- Blue and purple food colouring diluted with water
- Small syringes or pipettes
- Container for the colouring – cupcake baking pan is great
- Glue and glue brushes and Tissues or cottonwool for the clouds
- Large sheets of paper – preferably with a slight gloss so the food colouring runs off it
- Teacher – blue pen or crayon

Method:

Teacher: Dilute the food colouring and place into a stable container with small indents. Draw a line across the top of the vertical page about 10 cm down for the clouds. Place some paper or plastic underneath where the children will be painting to catch the drips.

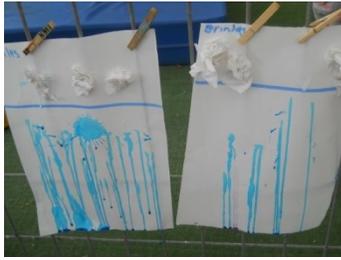
The children place a blob of glue on the top of the page, crumple a tissue and place it on the paper. Add a few more clouds to the top of the page. Attach the paper to a vertical art easel or the fences so the food colouring can run down the page. The children fill the syringe with food colouring and holding it near the drawn line slowly release the colouring and repeating along the line until the page is filled with rain streaks.

Optional: Paint the clouds black and grey at another table



Notes:

- Food colouring is messy and does stain the childrens hands for a while. Work outside.
- The very small syringes work best otherwise you get too much colouring running down the page and some children made blobs of paint by releasing the syringe too fast
- Some children coloured the clouds
- Regular paper works but with the water in the food colouring the paper absorbs the water and makes fuzzy lines and does not run on the paper as well as slightly glossy paper



If you don't have access to a vertical easel or a fence you can place some boxes or blocks under a plastic lid or box which will create the opportunity for the paint to run downwards.

Egg box bugs and butterflies using tissue paper squares on the wings

Themes: Garden visitors (butterflies and bugs)

You will need:

- Tissue paper in colours of your choice – cut into smaller squares and separated
- Glue and glue brushes
- Egg boxes cut into smaller segments – see pictures
- Lightweight card for the wings
- Paint
- **Optional** – Scissors to cut their own wings and glitter to add sparkle

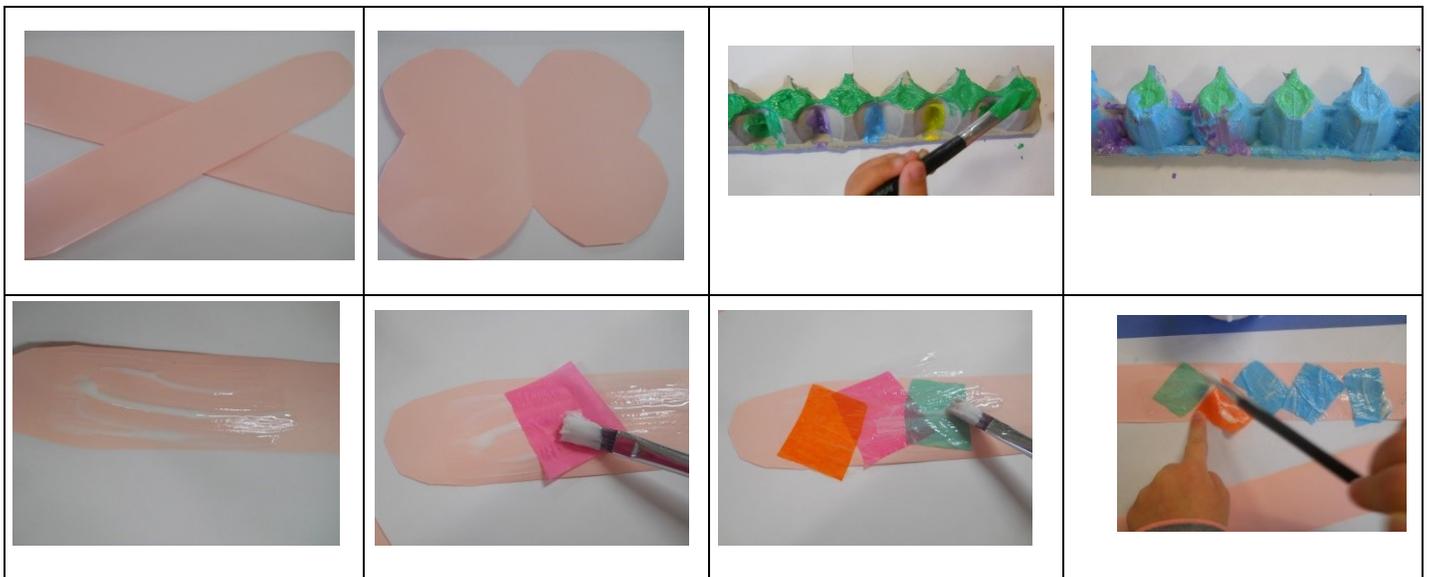


Method:

Teacher: Cut the tissue paper into squares. Make sure the squares are separated.

Prepare the egg boxes and cut wings for a butterfly or bug

The children paint the egg box body and set aside to dry. The wings are created by applying tissue paper to them. Spread some glue on the wings and using the paint brush pick up one piece of tissue paper. This is the reason it needs to be separated so they don't pick up clumps of tissue paper squares. The children paint another light coat of glue over the tissue paper. They continue this until the wings are well covered. If the paper extends over the edge of the wings leave to dry and then cut away the excess. The wings are pasted to the body. This activity is best done at two tables.





Notes:

- Encourage the children to wipe their paint brushes. Excess glue becomes messy.
- Encourage the children to pick up the tissue paper pieces using their paint brush. If they use their hands it all sticks together
- If the tissue paper squares are not separated they come in clumps which isn't effective
- Some children only placed a few pieces on the wings and had to be reminded to cover the space
- A few of the younger children placed way too much tissue paper on the outline
- Cut the wing shapes before giving to the children. If old enough they can cut their own on an outline. Glitter can be added for some sparkle.



Crepe paper backgrounds with drawings

I saw this idea on Pinterest so I thought I would give it a try as it would work across several age groups. The children did enjoy the activity but some lacked enough focus to fill the background with the crepe paper strips while others were excessive and used too much glue and too many strips of crepe paper. The joy of this activity is that there is no right or wrong way of doing this activity. This activity is best done over two days

Theme: Process art and drawing

Other themes: Depending on the colours used and what is drawn

Ages: 3 - 5 year olds

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

Materials:

- Crepe paper – streamers or sheets cut into strips – 3-4 colours
- Glue and glue brushes
- Firm base such as a cereal box or thick card
- Paper for drawing pictures
- Scissors
- Wax crayons or koki pens



Method:

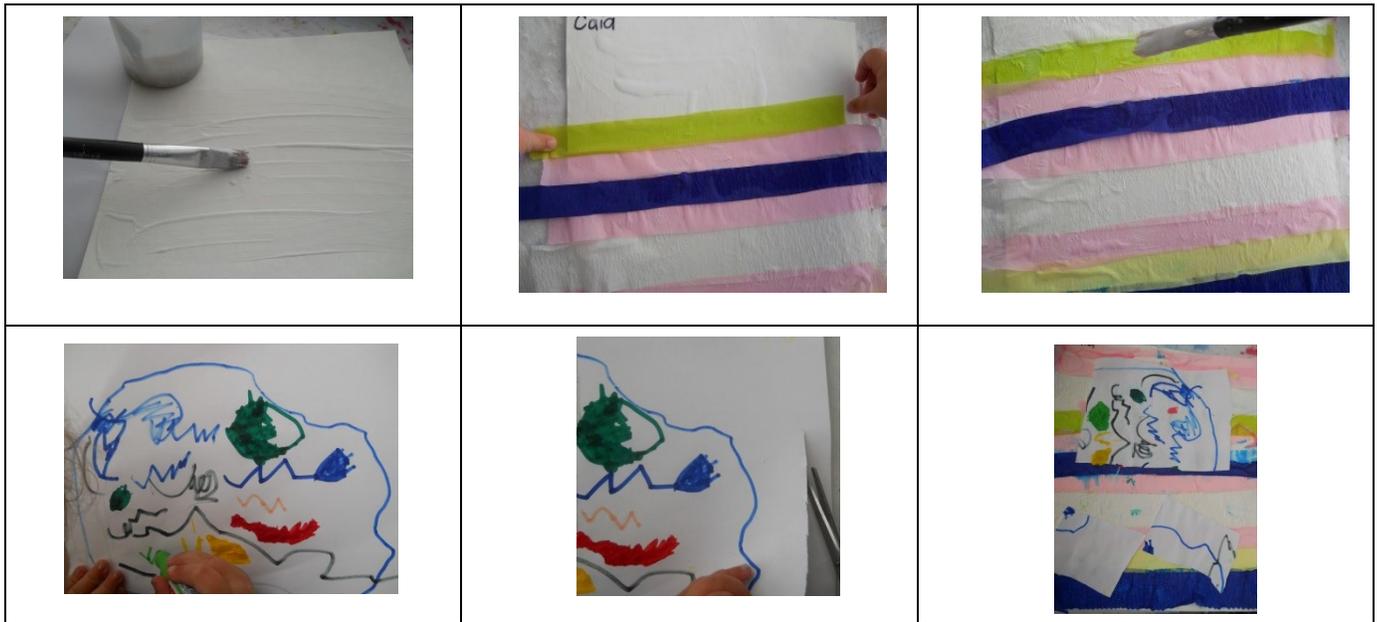
Teacher: Cut the crepe paper streamers into pieces the same size approximately of the width of the cardboard base. If you don't have streamers cut the crinkle paper into strips about 1.5 cm wide and then cut these strips as explained.

The children cover the base with a good layer of glue. The children add strips of crepe paper to the base card. Some children did random strips in several directions while others preferred to lay them in neat rows. Encourage the children to press the crepe paper into the glue using their fingers. The crepe paper can be painted with extra glue to be sure it's well secured. Some wrinkling will happen. Leave to dry. The children complete their drawing.

Drawing

The children draw a picture of their choice or according to the theme and cut it out. The cut out picture is pasted to the crepe paper background.

I found the children did too detailed drawings and too big so restrict the paper size to A5 and encourage the children to draw a picture of themselves.



Notes:

- Younger children may scribble instead of drawing a picture
- Select the colour of the background to match the theme e.g. blue for sky or water
- Some children may need help with cutting out their picture. Some children cut their picture into pieces and pasted the cut pieces to the background
- Don't make the cardboard base too big.
- Some children enjoyed putting the strips in neat rows which was also effective.
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Snakes made from straws, stars and pipe cleaners

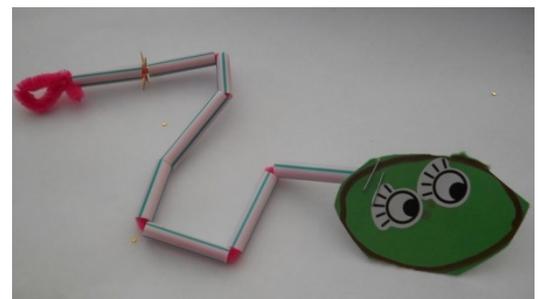
I am always looking for ways to engage the boys in fine motor and eye hand co-ordination opportunities and to practice the skill in a fun way. This activity succeeded in doing both and I had plenty of boys join this activity. The main threading items are cut straws and the idea I saw used beads between the straws but I never had any handy when I needed them so I used some stars I had which had holes in them. It did challenge and frustrate some children but if that happened I just told them to leave out the stars. Pipe cleaners are excellent for threading and of course the snake could be bent to look like its moving

Theme: Reptiles

Other themes: Wild animals, zoo animals

Ages: 3 - 5 year olds

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



Materials:

- Plastic or paper straws cut into smaller pieces about 1 cm (macaroni can be used)
- Stars with holes or beads (can be left out)
- Pipe cleaners
- Cardboard, koki pens and googly or sticker eyes

Teacher: Stapler or sticky tape to attach the snake head to the body.

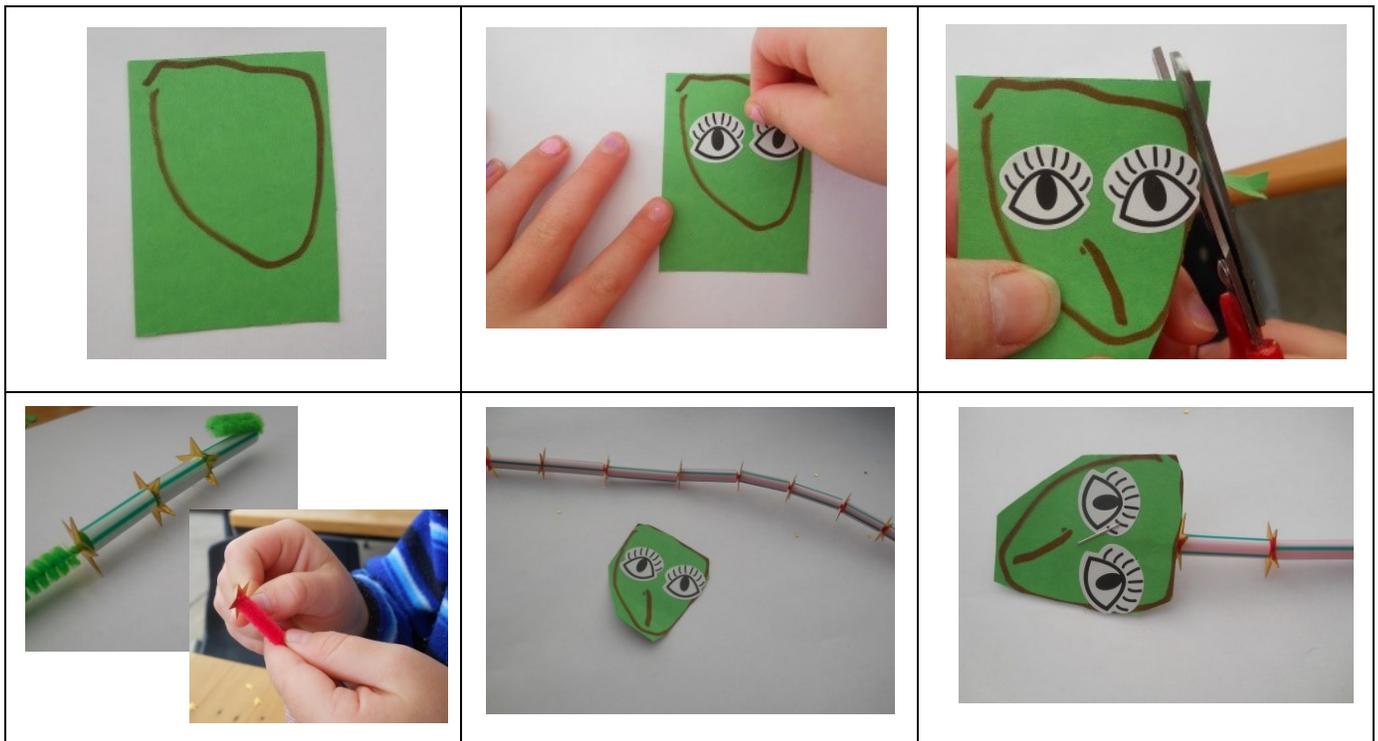


Method:

Teacher: Cut the straws into 1 cm pieces. Secure a straw to the end of each pipe cleaner so the straws don't fall off.

The children draw an oval face outline on the small piece of cardboard, stick on googly or sticker eyes (can draw them) and cut out the snake head/face. The children select a pipe cleaner and thread on a straw and a star repeating the pattern and leaving a piece of pipe cleaner free to secure the snake head.

Staple or secure the head with sticky tape. Bend the snake so it looks like its moving.



Notes:

- The stars were quite challenging to thread. Beads will be easier or leave it out or use two different coloured straws to do patterning while threading.
- Sticky tape secured the heads better than a stapler
- Remember to secure the end by bending over the pipe cleaner so the straws don't fall off.

Regards
Karin

