

Preschool Themes Newsletter – June 2014

Hello Everyone,

I hope this newsletter finds you all well. Our weather in New Zealand has cooled down considerably and the winter rains have started to fall. We just get the children used putting on sun hats and sun screen and now it's the never ending request for jackets and shoes in order to be able to play outside. The wet weather makes for very noisy and challenging days.

We have continued to do some autumn art activities which I have included here.

This month is Father's day so I am including a few ideas for you to consider making for the awesome dads. It is a lot more challenging to make 'gifts' for the dads but cards are a good alternative and will be well appreciated. My Pinterest boards for Father's day

(<http://www.pinterest.com/kstedall/fathers-day/>) and winter

(<http://www.pinterest.com/kstedall/winter/>) both have some great ideas to use and supplement the theme books.



New theme manual

Thank you to everyone who sent in suggestions for themes they would like me to include in the range. I have decided to write a theme on 'under the ground'. Congratulations to the winners of the lucky draw: Georgina van Wyk, Brenda Gallie, Susan Ramos, Alisa Scott, Maria Martins and Carina Van Wyk. Let me know your choice of theme and postal address and a book will be sent to you. You may choose to wait for the new theme too. rodandkarin@xtra.co.nz

I received many theme suggestions but it was clear that some of you are not aware of the most updated and newer themes. Also many of you suggested themes which can be found within another theme. An example of this is the police and emergencies which can be found in the theme on Safety.

All the themes and the theme concepts (what gets discussed in each theme) can be found on the web site www.preschoolthemes.co.za

Some creative activities

Autumn leaf painting with pom poms in pegs (good for the younger children too but they tend to pull the pom poms out of the pegs)

For this activity you need some real autumn leaves (you can do the same activity with cardboard leaves but then you don't need to attach it to another paper). Don't even attempt to glue the leaves to the background paper as it will not adhere. It is far more successful to pop in a few staples. The children painted the leaves using pom poms in pegs. I decided we needed a change from paint brushes! If you don't have pom poms, cotton wool balls or small sponges will be very effective too. I used yellow and orange but it would have been better with red and yellow to create orange but the red paint we have at the moment is very pink and I decided it would not give me a good effect. The children dabbed the paint onto and around the leaves. I liked the end product.

There were no real problems with the activity other than the pom poms tended to pop out of the peg. Some of the younger children tried to get the pom poms out of the pegs.

It is advisable to place the paint in a flat container otherwise there will be way too much paint on the peg and pom poms. You don't need too many pom poms for this activity as they can be reused. If you choose to use cotton wool balls they will need to be changed as they will get soggy. Paint brushes can be used.

My pom poms were sparkly as that was all school had.





Leaf printing

While the children were painting their leaves I did a quick try of printing with the leaves which was quite effective.

Leaf rubbing

We used the wax crayons sideways with no paper covering the crayon to rub over the leaf. The leaf was placed under the paper with the veins top side up. The children struggle a bit with this but it's great for a side table activity and for the older children.



Glitter autumn leaves

A child came in with a packet of autumn leaves he had collected on a walk over the weekend so I used the opportunity to create glittered autumn leaves. As above, we stapled the leaves to a background page, painted the leaf with coloured glue and then sprinkled glitter on the leaves to make them sparkly and coloured. We only had red glitter left in the art supply, but I think gold would have looked lovely too. We buy our glitter in big bags and it's not too expensive. Since we put out glitter quite often the children are well behaved and know how to tip the excess glitter back into the flat container. You may need to supervise closely if they are not used to using glitter and ration it out in little cups.



Cut and paste pizza

To encourage the children's cutting skills we made pizza for our art activity. The children loved this activity and were very intrigued with the 'tomato sauce glue'. Lots of cutting practice followed. Many children really struggle with the cutting action. By offering the children strips of paper and a purpose for the cutting they managed really well to snip the paper onto the pizza.

You will need:

Paper plates preferably large, glue mixed with red paint (I added a bit of orange), strips of yellow, red and green paper, scissors, brown paper circles for mushrooms and we used black buttons for olives.



The children painted the



paper plate with a good layer of red glue and then carefully snipped the cheese, bacon and green peppers onto the pizza and added some mushrooms and olives. We also used some matchsticks which some children fetched from the open art area but they did not stick well.

There was lots of discussion and this is a great activity for those children who are excessive with the glue and materials as the more the better BUT make sure they have used a lot of glue and the snipped pieces are actually on the glue otherwise everything falls off when they pick up their pizzas. Also DRY FLAT.

Notes: Some children took a lot of mushrooms and olives so you may have to ration them.

For several days the children kept asking if they could make more pizzas.

Painting with water colour paint and drawing

Water colour paint adds a new dimension to painting and the children enjoy using them. Here are a few points to be aware of

- I prefer to leave the black paint out of the tray if I can. It dominates all the other colours and turns all the colours to be a grey, muddy mess. For some reason the children seem to like using the black!
- Supervise as the children often fetch water and make a real mess.
- Change the water the children use to rinse their brushes often.
- Set clear rules and boundaries at the start of the activity
- Don't stress if you do get muddy colours
- Show the children how to add a bit of water and then rub the paint onto the brush
- The ideal water colours come in big hard blocks of colour which get out into a paint tray. The ones you buy cheaply from the supermarket in the tins is not ideal, especially the very small and useless brush that is included.

Free painting and painting drawings

In the pictures below you can see some free painting and drawing. Tadiwa drew a picture and spent a very long time painting between the lines, while Kaitlin painted a flower next to her house she drew.



Tadiwa's painting



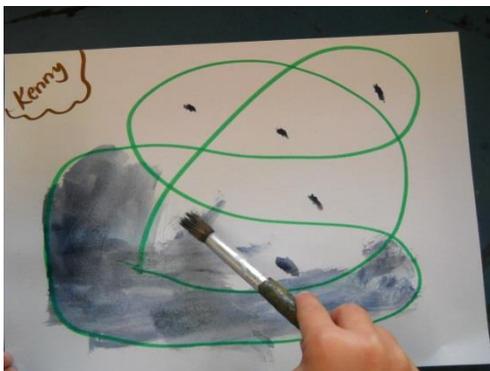
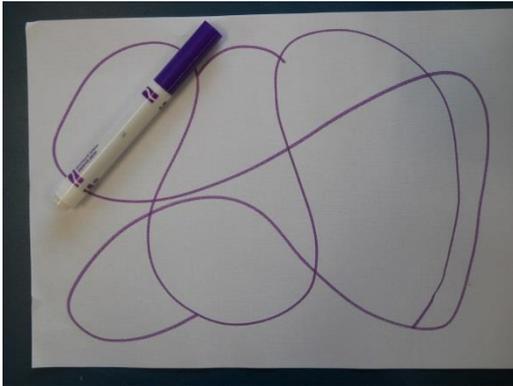
Outlining a water colour painting with koki pens (extending the painting activity)

The children painted a picture and used koki pens to outline the picture instead of drawing first



Scribble pattern and painting the shapes

The children struggle a bit to create an open scribble pattern so I helped some of them by guiding their hand. They carefully painted the shapes. Notice the nice clean paint blocks



Emergent writing

This child chose to paint letters



A few random ideas

Here are a few games and ideas we use in our classroom in New Zealand. I am sure you can source similar equipment in South Africa from the educational toys shop in Pretoria or Johannesburg

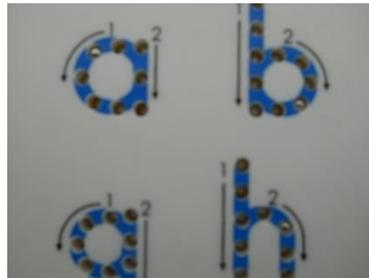


Counting and sequencing

This maths game is very versatile and teaches many skills. The children have to place the upright pegs in sequence from smallest to tallest. They arrange the numbers in sequence and match the same number of balloons. (Unfortunately no 1 is missing). They have to place the wooden hops over the wooden sticks according to the correct number so there is counting

and fine motor. The game is made of wood so it's nice and durable. The pieces could be used in a ring time on maths.

Magnetic alphabet letters



This activity keeps the child occupied for some time. The letters are filled with small metal balls and the pen has a magnet on the tip. Starting at the correct indicated starting point the child touches each dot to bring the metal ball up and form the letter. Excellent for fine motor, concentration and pencil grip and very tactile.

A few other ideas

Raking autumn leaves using adult garden tools



The children loved raking up the autumn leaves using adult sized tools.



Balloon hitting

The balloons were tied to a piece of string. The children stretched and jumped to reach the balloons. This needs to be supervised. The game did last about an hour before the balloons were popped.

Baking (I have some of these recipes which I can e mail to you – send me a request to rodandkarin@xtra.co.nz)

The children each took a scoop of dry ingredients and wet ingredients and mixed them together. They patted the mixture onto some baking paper, cut out shapes, baked the cookies and enjoyed them for afternoon tea. I am a bit of a baking perfectionist so I had to stand back and let the children create. The biscuits tasted pretty good at the end of it all and they ate them with pride and enthusiasm.



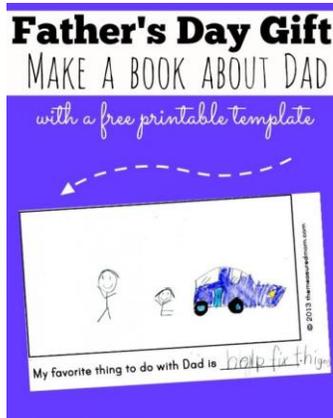
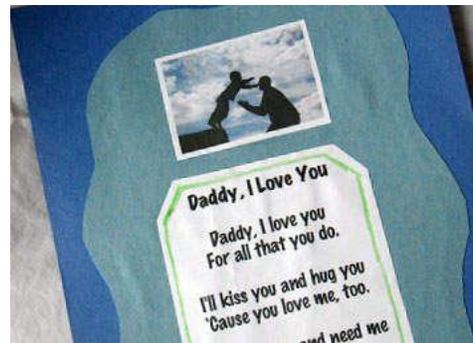
Preschool concerts



I have had a request for ideas for preschool concerts. I know some time ago someone mentioned that they had some nice concert ideas they were willing to share. Please can you let me know if you do have any ideas so I can share them with others? Or where we can find some?

Father's day activities: <http://www.pinterest.com/kstedall/fathers-day/>

Please look at the pinterest boards for the links for these activities. Don't forget that some children may not have a daddy or may have two daddies so be sensitive to the need to make a card for someone else or two cards.



Happy teaching

Regards
Karin