

Preschool Themes Newsletter – March 2019

Hello Everyone,

I hope you have all managed to survive the heat and are looking forward to some cooler autumn days. It has been the hottest year on record in NZ so it has been a challenging month at school. But the weather has turned and we can look forward to the beautiful autumn colours in the trees. And some of you can look forward to a school holiday break.

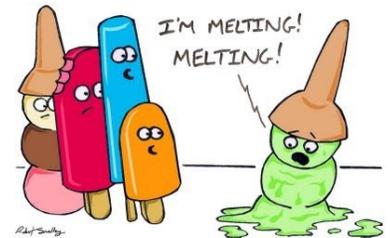
I have been at school a lot this month so I have had the opportunity to try out a variety of art techniques at school which I have shared with you in this newsletter.

Easter is later in April this year so the Easter ideas will be in the next newsletter.

I have an Easter theme manual which can be ordered on the preschool themes website www.preschoolthemes.co.za to make your weekly planning and preparation easier.

The Easter Pinterest board has many ideas for your convenience

<https://www.pinterest.nz/kstedall/easter-school/>



Success at school

School Readiness

If a child can hold a pencil,
write their own name,
count to 100,
recognise all the colours & shapes.
But doesn't know how to make friends.
Manage their emotions
and conflict resolution.
To be independent
& have self help skills.
None of the other stuff matters.

Following on from last month's newsletter I found these words of wisdom which I wanted to share with you as they really reflect what school readiness is.

The video clip link below is also really worth watching. It's an interesting discussion on self-regulation in children and the importance of having self-regulation as a measure of success in their future. I am sure you can all identify children in your group who are unable to self-regulate.

<https://www.facebook.com/StoryparkApp/videos/2331389813561489/>

Free painting

Free painting is a very valuable activity to set out for the 3-6 year olds. Free painting implies that the child decides what to paint and how to apply the paint to the paper. So when you put out a painting activity and request the child paints something related to the theme that is not truly free painting. There is nothing wrong with asking the child to paint something theme related, and it's a great activity to set out. But it is product focussed and not process focussed.

Generally the younger the child the more the focus should be on enjoying the paint, brush and colours rather than expecting a picture.

I have included several examples of free painting from the younger child and then some with the older children who spontaneously choose to paint "something".

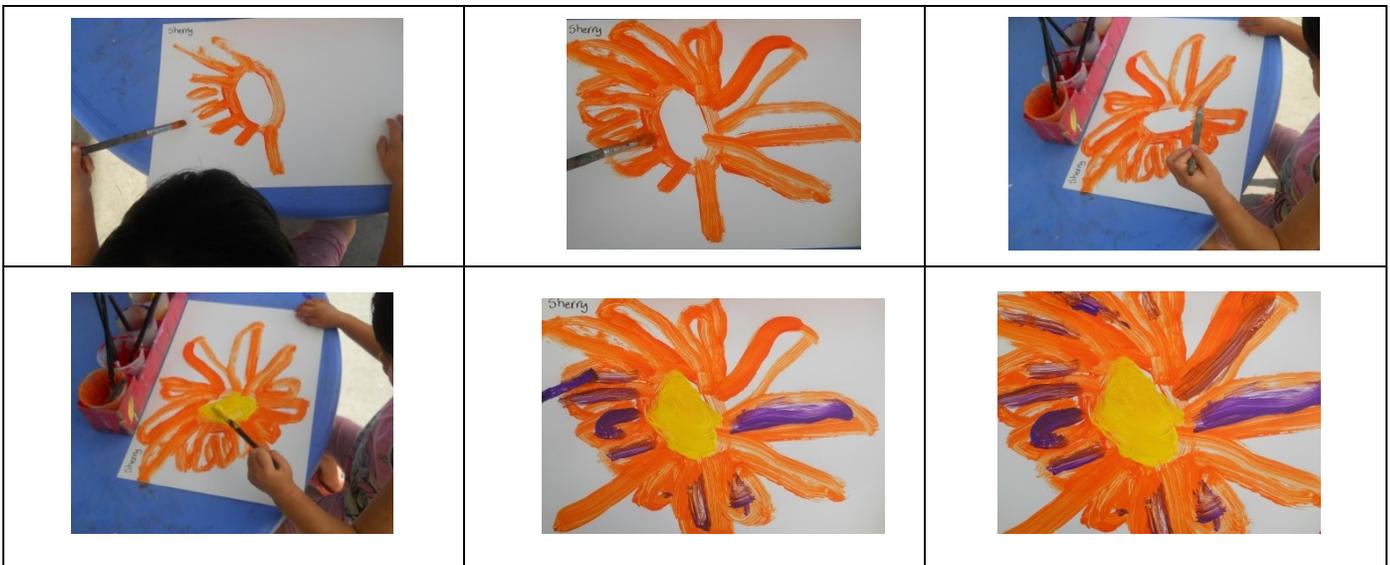
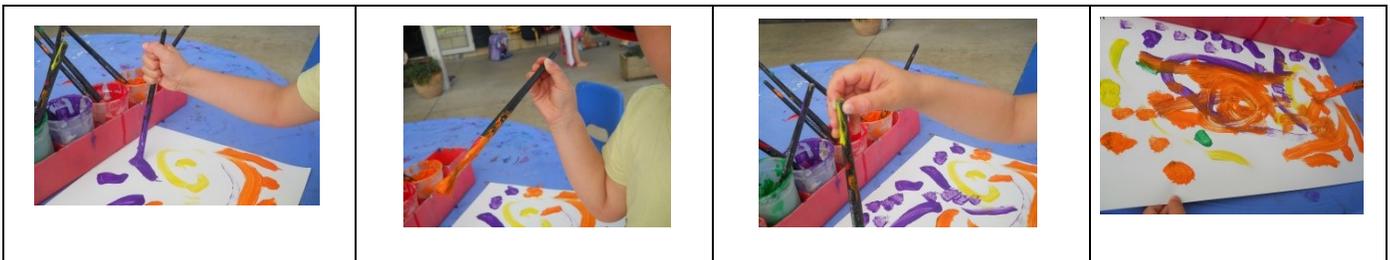


While the children were painting I observed the brush grips on the paint brushes, who was left and right handed, who changed the brush from hand to hand, who used two brushes (one in each hand) etc. Something of interest came up while observing the children. One child who is just 3 y painted with the fist grip which is perfectly normal for his age and development but then I noticed he was holding it with a pincher grip right at the top of the brush resulting in very poor control of the brush. I then realised that the paint brush had paint on it and he didn't want to get his fingers dirty. What I am saying here is don't be quick to assess the child and not be observant of the situation. Once I wiped the brushes clean he was quite happy to resume his fist grip and paint with confidence.



A few tips on setting out free painting:

- Younger children only need 3 colours to choose from
- Sometimes it's easier to tape a few pages of paper or a large piece from a roll to the table and let the younger children do group painting
- Don't fill the paint pots too full as there is inevitably going to be some colour mixing
- Large paper is better but it does limit the number of children at the table
- Place two or three brushes in each paint pot so they don't have to wait and squabble about the brushes
- Ready mixed paint in bottles have vibrant colours and are a good thickness for painting (if you have access to them)
- Brushes should be medium to thick rather than thin for large paper
- Using white paint as the base and adding a few blobs of colour make lovely pastel coloured paint.



This flower was painted by a 4 ½ year old who is left handed. To confirm that the child is actually left handed I observed that when she changed paint colours she always took the brush in her left hand. This needs to be seen in other activities and several times for confirmation.

These children painted pictures of their choice and named their drawing showing me that they understand pictures convey ideas. I wrote what they said on the painting



Some paintings by the younger children – lots of early emergent writing in these paintings – lines, circles



Creative activities



I was given a whole lot of 'kits' from a company that made craft kits and closed down. Lots of these kits were missing parts. This boat kit had the wooden base, white paint and glitter glue. Since there was not enough for all the children I improvised and created my own wooden bases with some wood we had been donated for our woodworking area. These did not have a hole for me to add a mast so I used a screw

driver to create a hole in the wood. For the mast I added a pipe cleaner folded in half and both ends glued into the hole. The decorated sails were stapled to the pipe cleaner (teacher activity). The wooden bases from the kits had a hole already so I just pushed the ends of the pipe cleaner into that hole. I tied a piece of string to the mast for the children to pull the boat along in the water tray. Unfortunately I was not present when they floated their boats so I did not get any photos. We work with several teachers in the group at the same time and I was not on outdoor duty when they put the boats in water but the outdoor teacher informed me that the sails were too big and ended up getting wet and causing the boats to fall over. So I cut them a bit smaller. Just something to bear in mind when preparing the materials.



Wooden boats

Themes: Water, water transport, wood and trees

Ages: 4 - 5 year olds

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

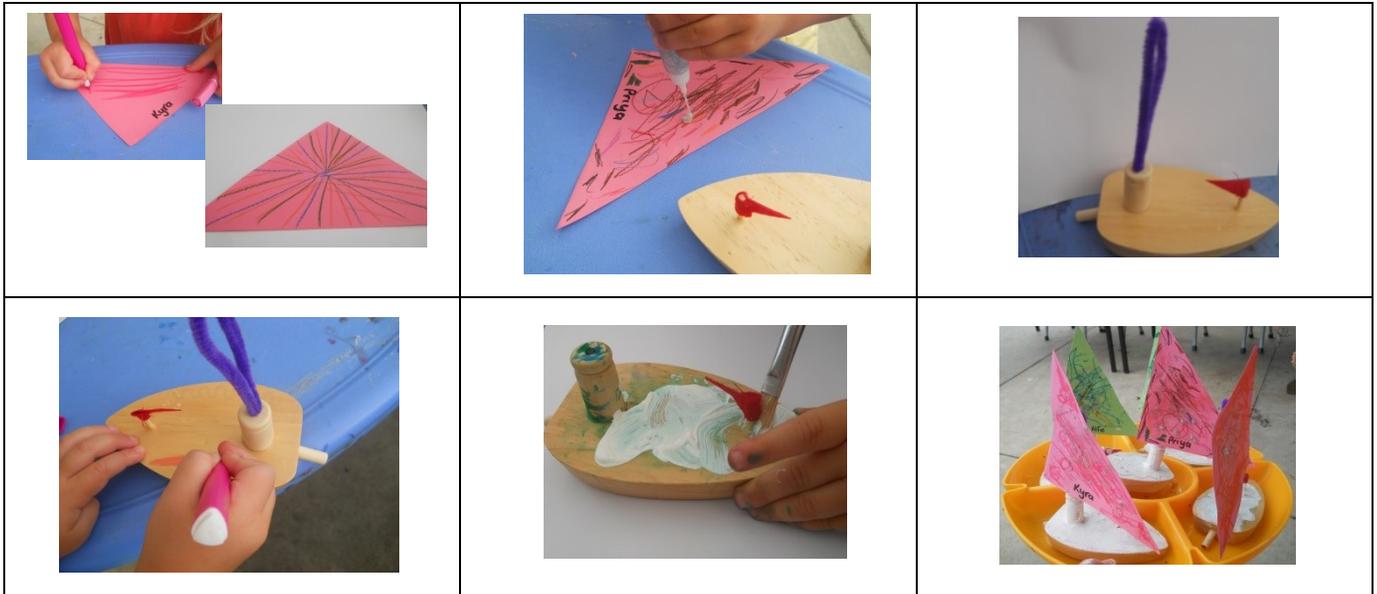
Materials:

- Cardboard – triangles
- Wooden base
- Pipe cleaner
- Crayons or marking pens
- Glue
- Optional: Glitter glue

Method:

Teacher: Prepare triangles. Make a hole in the wood for the pipe cleaner. (Use a screw driver). Glue the pipe cleaner into the hole

Child: The child colours the triangle sail using crayons or marking pens. Optional – add glitter glue. The sail gets stapled to the pipe cleaner mast at the end of the activity. The children paint the boat bases (They only used the white paint provided with the kits but coloured paint would be lovely too.) Once the boats and sails are dry, the teacher staples the sail to the mast, attaches some wool or string to the mast and the children enjoy sailing their boats in water or pretend to sail on a blue sheet on the ground.



Notes:

- Instead of painting the boat bases the children can colour with crayons or marking pens
- This activity is more suited to the older age group.

Feet painting

This activity is best done outdoors as you can see its lots of fun but rather messy. You do need to supervise closely and preferably have another teacher or assistant to help with clean up time. This activity does cause the children to be quite silly and several children who slipped in the paint were not too happy. It also extended to hand painting.

Themes: My and my body, senses, hands

Ages: 3 - 5 year olds

Skills: Large muscles, balance as it gets slippery!

Materials:

- Long piece of cardboard or thick brown paper. Flattened cardboard boxes are effective too
- Ready mixed paint
- Bucket of soapy water and towel



Method:**Teacher:** Squirt paint all over the long strip of paper**Child:** The child walks through the paint with their bare feet using their feet to spread the paint. The teacher may need to add more paint. At the end of the activity the children wash their feet in the soapy water. Excuse all the shadows in these real life action photos.**Notes:**

- Some children slipped and ended up being covered in paint
- Some children chose to use their hands to paint
- The dried painted paper can be cut into shapes and used for displays

**Spray bottle pictures**

I was given a few spray bottles so I looked for an activity to do with them. This activity was really good in some ways and a bit of a disaster in others. It is messy so make sure it's well supervised and in an area that is easy to clean up.

The main issue was that the children sprayed too much moisture onto the paper and some really struggled with the triggers of the spray bottles BUT every child LOVES using a spray bottle. I used food colouring or school dye diluted in the bottles but this does stain clothes and hands and surfaces. One of the main issues of the children using the spray bottles is that they point them downwards and the triggers don't work well. I would suggest you have some Carlton roll to mop up the excess paint otherwise it drips on the floor as they carry it to the drying rack. It is also better to dry this art work flat.



Alternatively this same activity can be done by splattering paint from a toothbrush, but guide the children as they tend to splatter with the bristles facing upwards instead of downwards

Theme: Me and my body, Shapes, any theme you choose**Ages:** 4 - 5 year olds**Skills:** Small and large muscles, eye hand co-ordination

Materials:

- Lightweight card or cereal boxes pre-cut into geometric shapes
- Presstick
- Spray bottles filled with diluted food colouring
- Large background paper
- Something to protect the work surface
- Rubbish bin



Method:

Teacher: Prepare geometric shapes from the cardboard

Child: The child selects the shapes they require to make their picture. Some children will make a picture while the younger children may just select shapes to place. Once the shapes are secured with small pieces of presstick, the child sprays food colouring over the shapes and on the surrounding paper. Once the paper is nicely covered the child carefully removes the pieces of cardboard and discards them. The picture is left white where the cardboard was.

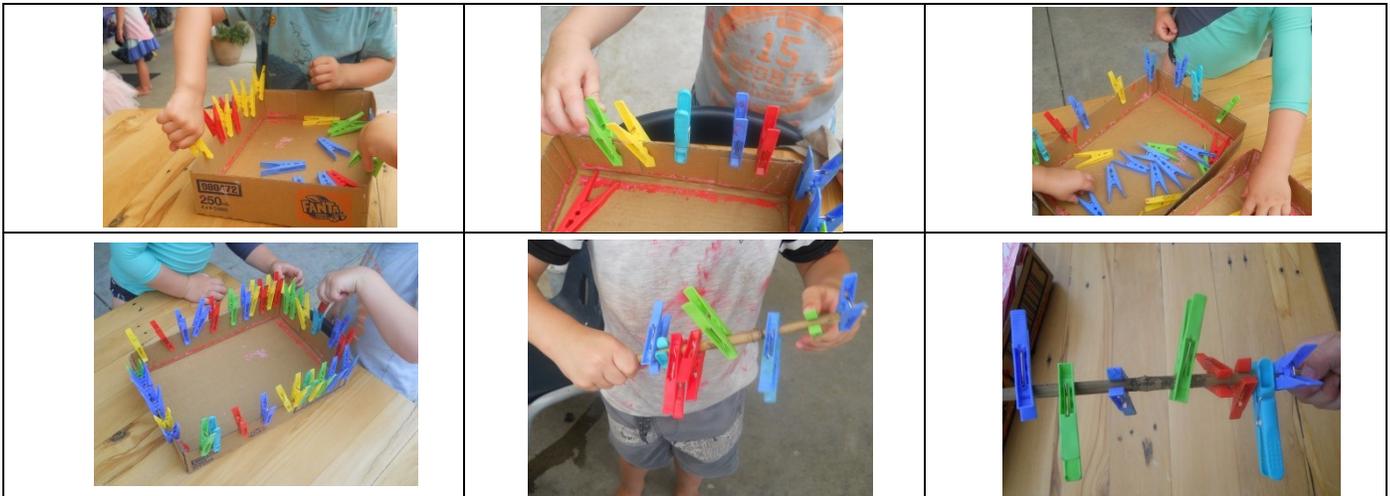


Notes:

- Children sprayed too much dye on their pictures which made big messy pools of colour instead of attractive spots
- The dye smudged when some children lifted the cardboard
- Make sure you have enough spray bottles
- I used a variety of colours in the spray bottles but this caused a lot of disputes as they wanted to use every colour . I would probably just use one colour next time.

Pegging washing pegs to a box – fine motor skills

I have been drying the childrens art work on the fence in the outdoor covered area using plastic washing pegs to secure the art work to the fence. The children really love putting their own peg onto their picture and often they want to put several pegs per picture. So I decided to put the pegs out with a shallow cardboard box and invited them to peg the pegs along the edge of the box. The boys particularly liked this activity. It's actually quite a tricky skill to squeeze a peg open and place it on the edge of the box. You can see in the first picture the child is using the fist grip to open his peg and in the next photo the child is using a more refined pincher grip. Really great practice for prewriting skills. One child was playing with a stick at the time and decided it would be a good idea to secure his pegs to his stick. Which actually worked out quite well and may be an option if you don't have a box handy. **Note:** The pegs need to be ones that open and not the kind that that just slips over the box. The slip on ones will still develop fine motor skills but less so.



Notes:

- **Sorting by colour:** Colour the edge of the boxes so the child matches the peg colour to the colour on the box.
- **Threading pegs:** Most washing pegs have a hole so the children can thread the pegs like beads.

Valentines hearts



Happy teaching
Regards
Karin