

Preschool Themes Newsletter – May 2016

Hello Everyone,

Here we are in the fifth month of the year. Wow how time flies. With school holidays and I took off some time to spend with my grandchildren I have not been at school much this past month, but I do have a few nice ideas in this newsletter.

May brings Mother's day so please visit the Pinterest page for many ideas to help make this day special for the mums. I have included a few ideas from this board at the end of the newsletter.

<https://nz.pinterest.com/kstedall/mothers-day-ideas/>

Happy Mother's day to you all. Have a wonderful month of May.



Block play

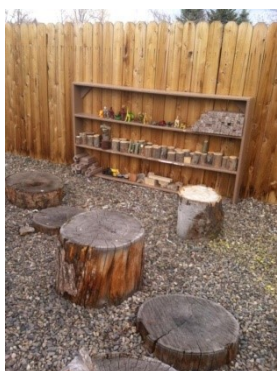
In the centre I work at the block area is one of the most used areas by both boys and girls. The best blocks are the school blocks which are natural coloured and varnished with the sharp edges gently rounded. While a set of these blocks is not cheap they are such a great investment as they are durable, many children can use them at the same time, it's easy to add extra's to the area to stimulate play and they can be used by the teacher as a learning aid ... I can write a whole page on the learning that takes place from playing with the blocks too.

I have a Pinterest board for block play with many great ideas to use

<https://nz.pinterest.com/kstedall/block-play/>



Sets of school blocks can be purchased from Educational toy shops. Often you can purchase a small set and add to the set as finances allow. The measurements of the set of blocks are very specific so they all work together and balance well on each other.



Excellent article on block play <http://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/videos/foundations>

One of the best investments we can make in a child's education and playful enjoyment is the purchase of blocks of all kinds. Blocks are the quintessential educational toy. Block play provides hours of fun for children as well as enhancing the development of basic skills.

The best blocks for learning are unit blocks, which come in several sizes that are matched so that putting two smaller blocks together will be the same size as one larger block. Unit blocks can be evenly stacked in many different arrangements, and they allow children to compare sizes. When children pick a block to fill a space, they are learning about the meaning of "half" and "whole" as well as area and length. Blocks also encourage children to count, match, sort, group, and add and subtract. As a child is building she is experimenting with gravity, balance, and geometric shapes. Parents may help children learn by introducing math and science terms as they explore playing with blocks. Children learn these ideas much more quickly when they are dealing with how to actually balance the blocks or how many blocks they need to support a bridge they are building.

Block play helps children develop physically. Children develop both large and fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination when they play with blocks. These skills, especially the fine motor skills, help improve children's writing. Playing with blocks can lead to improved reading as well as writing skills. Keeping clipboards with pencils, markers, and plenty of paper near the blocks encourages children to make signs for their block buildings, learning how to connect sounds to letters. Children may want to draw a blueprint of their design so that they can recreate it at another time. Whenever possible, let children keep their block buildings standing and give them time to play again later. Coming back to their block structures and analyzing what they want to change enhances creativity and problem solving skills.

Children learn social and emotional skills as they share their block play with other children and parents. They learn to cooperate in building together. Adding toy people, cars, and trucks to the blocks helps children move from simple building to creating imaginative miniature worlds. Through this play, children learn about their social worlds by acting out life with little people figures. They make sense of what they see adults do and they explore ideas they learned in books. Children also have a safe way to explore emotions like anger and fear by acting them out in pretend worlds.

Art activities

Free painting as a group activity

I am often given large sheets of felt like fabric. I think it's used to cover furniture when being delivered to a furniture shop. This is great to use to cover a large table and invite several children to paint freely. The same can be done with large sheets of paper or even several pieces of newspaper will be effective but make sure you paint is fairly thick if using newspaper otherwise it may get soggy. Different skills are developed when the children paint in a group and need be considerate to others. The children still paint freely and individually on the large sheet, but you can suggest a theme to keep it cohesive. Do not expect the children to paint a joined picture. This is a great activity to

set out in the outdoor area or under a covered area outside as long as it's not too windy. Standing to paint gives a different perspective and encourages more large muscle movement as well as changing up a standard activity of free painting.



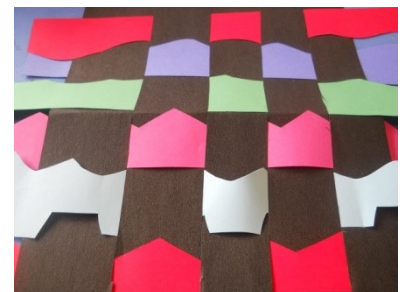
Weaving with paper using free paintings or coloured paper

Weaving is a fairly challenging activity for pre-schoolers so reserve this activity for the older children.

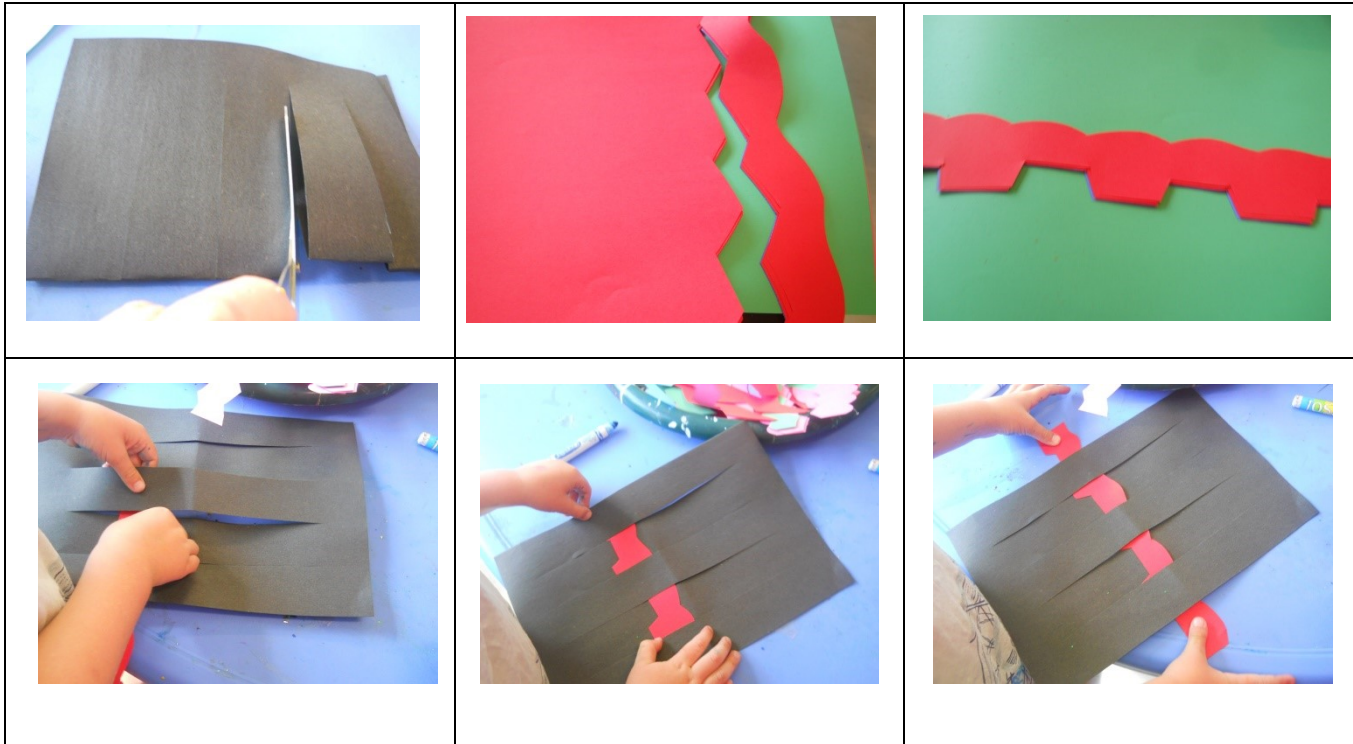
To prepare the weaving mats I used fairly thick black paper, folded it in half and cut slits stopping about 2 cm from the edge and cutting from the folded side. Any colour will work but slightly thicker paper works better.

I cut strips of coloured paper in different patterns and the children wove the paper strips through the weaving mats.

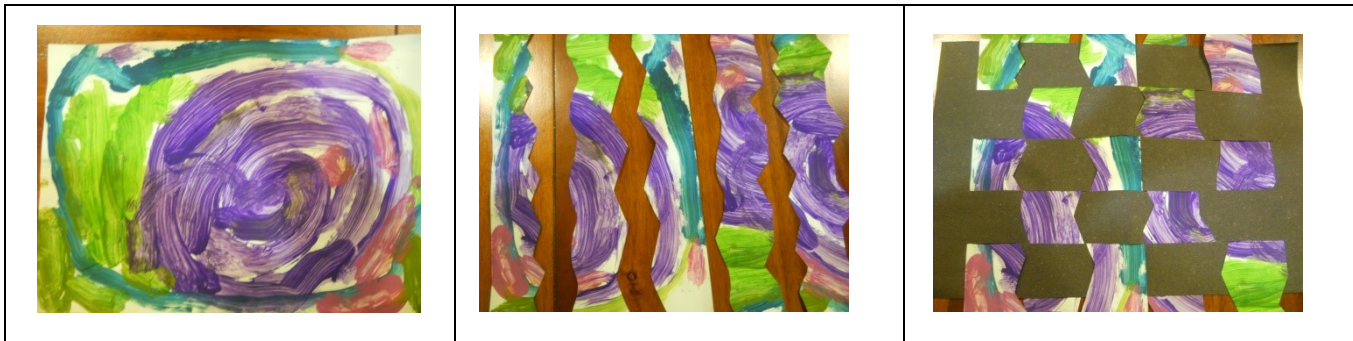
Make sure the strips are longer than the mats so you have some of the strips extending over the ends otherwise they will pull out easily. These ends can be secured with a bit of glue if necessary. Don't make the strips too thin and don't expect the children to do more than a few strips of weaving. If



they miss the pattern and do two over or under don't make them undo the weaving. It's more about developing fine motor skills. This activity can be applied to the themes of opposites, make place mats for a food theme or the kitchen in the home theme and hands.



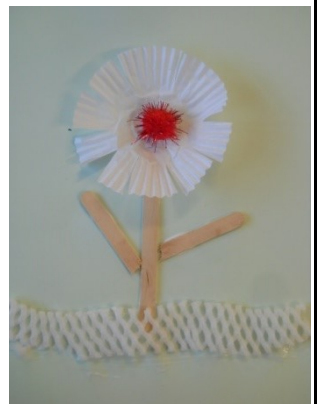
Often you end up with lots of "free paintings" the children have done. For this activity I used one of the child's free paintings she had created and I cut it into the weaving strips. The end result is lovely and bright and a great idea if you have limited access to coloured paper.



Paper cup cake liners free collage



For this activity I set out some white cupcake paper liners, wooden sticks and a few other collage materials such as pom poms, the packing that is used to keep pawpaw from bruising and glue and paper. We had some discussion about making flowers which several children did make, but being an open art area it was not long before the children were using the materials to create freely which is great too. One of the children turned her flower collage into a birthday card for her mom. Several children asked to make butterflies so I helped them cut the paper liners in half. I also set out scissors and encouraged the children to snip the edges of the cupcake liner to make the flowers look frilly. The children then painted their collage. The younger children did not make flower pictures but loved pasting the cupcake liners and painting them as a free collage.





Collage using fabric scraps (Mermaids)

I had a whole lot of satin silky fabric given to me so I took them to school and offered the children a free collage activity. Some of the shapes of the fabric made the children think of a mermaid's tail so the girls created mermaids. I added some sticky eyes and crayons to the activity. You do need to use white school glue otherwise the fabric falls off. School scissors are not much good for cutting fabric so I had fabric scissors to use for the teacher. The younger children enjoyed just pasting the collage material to the paper. I included some wooden sucker sticks and some pipe cleaners for arms and legs.



Mother's day Ideas

All these ideas can be found on the Pinterest board. <https://nz.pinterest.com/kstedall/mothers-day-ideas/>.

Once you find the activity on the board, Click on the image and it should take you to the instructions.

		
<p>Saved from teachertypes.com</p>	<p>https://nz.pinterest.com/rlinda19/</p>	<p>https://nz.pinterest.com/source/craftymorning.com/</p>

		
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Happy teaching

Regards
Karin