

## Preschool Themes Newsletter – May 2017

Hello Everyone,

Back to work we go! I hope term two treats you well. May is Mother's Day so I have included a separate attachment with a few ideas for you to use. I hope you all get treated well for Mother's Day too. As usual I have a Pinterest board for Mother's Day which has many more ideas so please do visit the board.

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

The preschool Facebook page is on 1947 members which is amazing and is very close to reaching the 2000 target so please like the page to stay updated on preschool issues. This is a good place to be informed of upcoming workshops, useful articles and sometimes just a bit of light humour to keep you going. There may even be a bit of a surprise for the 2000 th member! I promise not to bombard you with posts.

<https://www.facebook.com/preschoolthemes/>



### Art activities

#### First ring: Knowledge and visual perception

If you are using a specific theme such as dinosaurs, you will get far more creative pictures if you have discussed some different dinosaurs in mat time prior to doing this art activity. Look at pictures of different dinosaurs and plastic dinosaurs if you have any. Discuss the shape of the body, the number of legs, look at the tail, the shape and size of the face, the neck, what body covering they can see such as spikes, plates or textures and colours. With the help of the children choose some shapes and build a dinosaur on the board to reinforce the concept of planning before pasting. **Remove this dinosaur so the children do not copy your example**

#### Collage using pre-cut coloured paper shapes

This was a very open ended activity so the children chose what they would like to create but it will be great to use for a specific theme. The children made fish, houses, monster, dinosaurs and trucks. You will need to think about the colours and the shapes you set out if you do choose a specific theme so the children can be successful.

**TIP:** If you don't have any coloured papers then use paintings and drawings that the children have made. Often they end up with no name on the art work and instead of throwing the picture away save it for collage paper.

Alternatively magazines and newspaper can be used for this activity.

#### You will need:

- Pre-cut coloured paper shapes – include circles if you need wheels
- Glue and glue brushes
- Paper
- Optional: Wax crayons

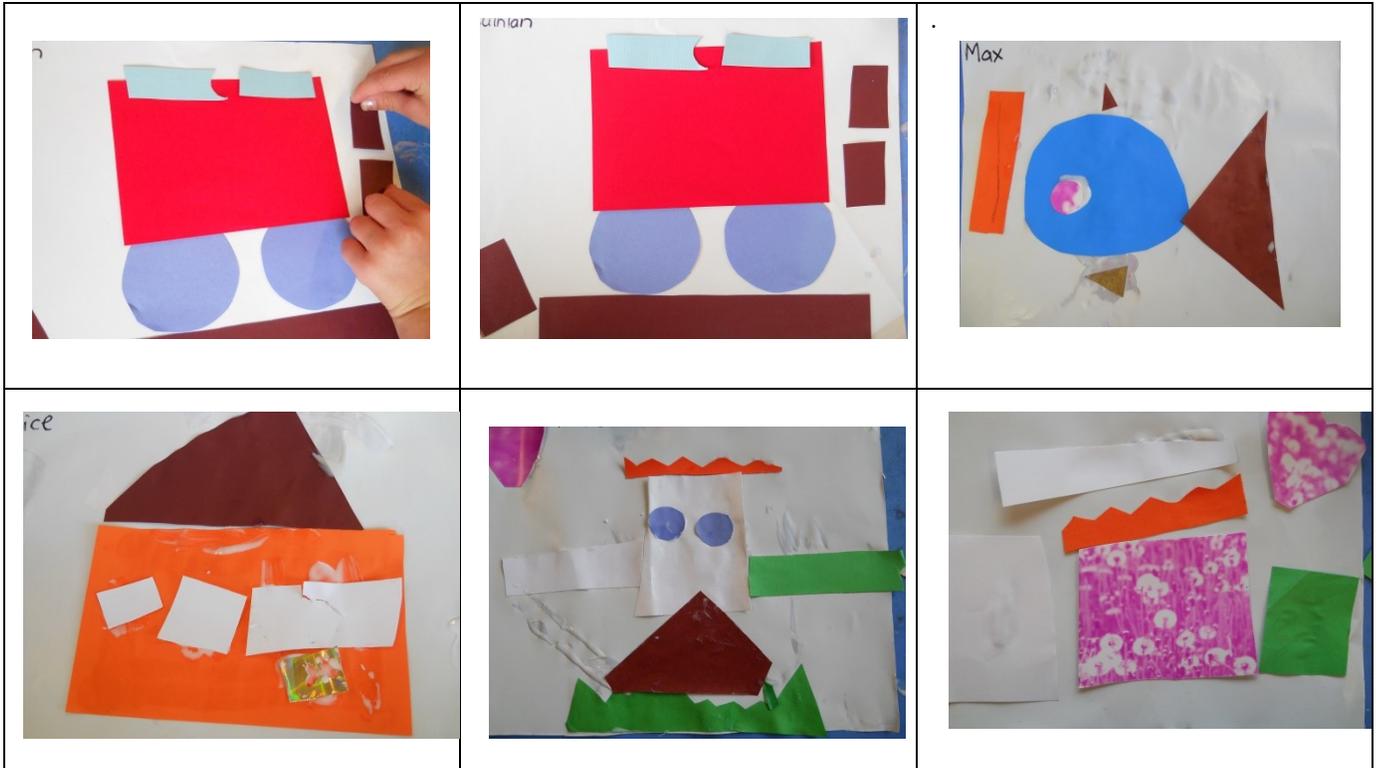
#### Method:

The child decides what picture they would like to create. I encouraged the children to plan first by placing all the pieces they need in the arrangement they want on the paper before pasting them. The children added glue to the back of the shapes and pasted them on the paper to create their picture. Some extra features such as faces, people, and other details can be added with wax crayons. I avoided offering the children paint for the details as they would just paint over the whole picture.



## Notes:

- This activity was enjoyed by the 4 to 5 year olds. The younger children will love the activity too but don't expect a picture.
- Teach the children to put the glue on the paper shape rather than on the paper.
- Encourage the children to wipe the glue brush on the container to prevent too much glue on the shapes.
- I prefer not to put out scissors for this activity as some children end up cutting all the shapes into tiny pieces! (That's another good activity in itself for another day) But it is a good opportunity for children to use scissors and create the shapes they need for their picture.
- Encourage the children to add extra details to complete the creation.



## Collage with tissue paper on milk bottle plastic

I was given a lot of milk bottles and wondered what to do with them. My original plan was to cut out oval egg shapes for Easter but the size of the plastic was too small, so I just used the pieces of plastic to create pieces for a mobile and to do some process art. I added some drawing to the collage activity to extend the activity.

### You will need:

- Plastic milk bottles clean – cut pieces from the sides
- Tissue paper cut into smaller pieces (NOT crinkle paper)
- Glue and glue brushes
- Optional: Glitter and koki pens

### Method:

The children painted the plastic shape with glue. They placed pieces of tissue paper onto the glue and pasted more glue over the shapes. Encourage the children to overlap the tissue paper to create new colours. I offered the children koki pens to add details to their creation. Some children chose to sprinkle glitter on the wet tissue paper.



## Notes:

- Make sure the tissue paper pieces are separated otherwise they tend to stick together when you cut them and the children pick up a clump instead of individual pieces. This is wasteful and frustrating for the children. It takes a bit of time to separate the pieces but it's well worth the time to prevent frustration.
- Some of the pieces folded over in the glue on the plastic. It's not a crisis.
- The glue dries clear so it's okay if they use a lot of glue on the plastic and over the shapes.
- This would be a good activity for the theme of shapes. Cut the plastic pieces into different shapes.
- Punch a hole in the top of the plastic and attach some wool or string and hang the pieces on a wire coat hanger as a mobile.
- This activity is not suitable for the younger children.
- Plastic trays with compartments are ideal to use for placing collage material on the tray.(see picture)



## Fine motor activities (small muscle development)

As you all know fine motor skills need to be well developed for children to succeed with formal learning.

The challenge for preschool teachers is to present many activities through play that allow the children opportunities to practice their fine motor skills. This does not include completing worksheets as the skills need to already be well developed to be able to complete worksheets!



## Tongs and dinosaurs with colour sorting and fine motor (and one to one matching)

Children love to use adult serving tongs. It's quite tricky to use tongs and a great fine motor activity. At our centre we have a container of small coloured plastic dinosaurs. I put out coloured milk lids and invited the children to use the tongs to pick up the coloured dinosaurs and place them into the milk lids. By using lids you add an extra skill and more fine motor practice. To extend the activity I encouraged the children to match the same coloured dinosaur to the matching coloured milk lid.

I placed the lids on a piece of paper to encourage the children to keep their lids in a small space. Some children managed to use the tongs with one hand only while others needed to use both hands. Some children struggled to match the same colours. We added in some counting of how many dinosaurs they had managed to pick up and match.



### You will need:

- Kitchen tongs
- Coloured milk lids
- Small items to pick up with the tongs – plastic shapes, dinosaurs, cut pieces of coloured plastic lids etc
- Paper or plastic mats



**Note:** If you don't have small items to pick up with the tongs let the children just pick up the milk lids from the container and match them to a coloured dot on some paper. Don't use water for this activity.

### No tongs – Use chopsticks or plastic spoons or forks

<https://nz.pinterest.com/source/educadiver.es>

### Filling lids with syringes – not suitable for the under 3's



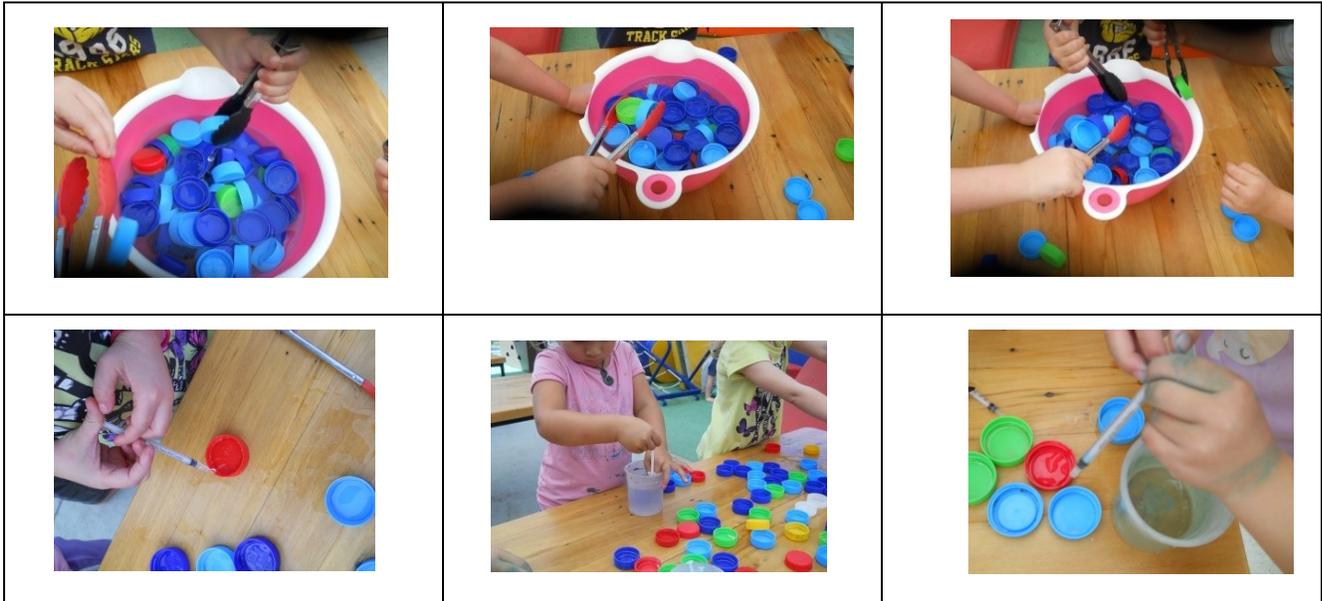
We were given a lot of expired small syringes and children just LOVE using syringes and playing with water so I had a lot of very excited children ready to participate in this fine motor activity.

I filled a bowl with water and placed it full of coloured milk lids on a table and within easy reach for all the children. The children had to pick up the lids with the tongs and place them on the table. They then used the syringes to fill the lids with water. I put some extra water in small plastic cups. Some children needed to be shown how to use a syringe.



If you don't have syringes, pipettes or eye droppers do the same job. ( see picture)

Note the excellent opportunities for fine motor practice along with perseverance which is always a useful skill to have in life.



**Fine motor activity with sand, tooth picks and cut straws**

For this activity I filled small containers with wet sand. If you don't have access to sand pit sand you can use playdough. I gave the children toothpicks and cut up straws. The children placed the toothpicks into the wet soil and placed the cut straws over the toothpicks. Before leaving the table the child removes the straws and the tooth picks which is an added fine motor exercise. It's a good idea to put the small bowl of sand onto a plastic or paper plate to prevent the sand from messing.



Alternatively place the tooth picks into large blocks of polystyrene

**Placing small beads or marbles into indents**

For this activity I used some beads I had and some bath "suction stickers". A non-slip bath mat will work well too. The children enjoyed carefully placing the beads into the indents. Place the shapes onto plastic plates to prevent the beads from rolling away.



Happy teaching  
Regards Karin