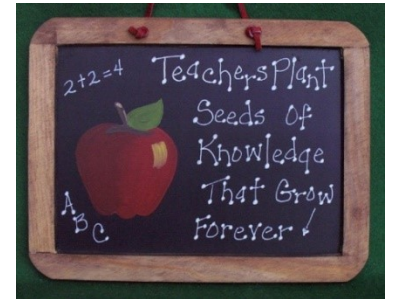


## Preschool Themes Newsletter – October 2017

Hello Everyone,

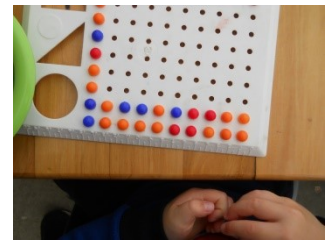
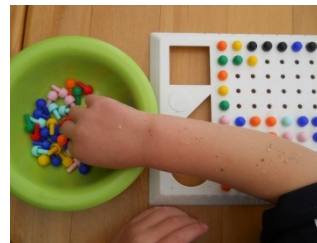
Welcome back to term four. I hope you had a restful holiday (if you were lucky to get one) and are rearing to go for the final countdown to the end of the year. I decided to hold back the newsletter until you were all back at school so this one is a bonus edition. We have been very busy at school enjoying some warmer weather and sunshine. With the arrival of spring we are enjoying the new growth, bird life and insects and have planted summer vegetables in the school garden. The outdoor environment is truly a third teacher and we make the best of all it has to offer each day.

While you were on holiday it was World Teachers Day. So a belated happy teacher's day to you all! I think you are all AMAZING.



### Crossing the midline

Every now and again I notice a child in the group who is unable to cross their midline. How do I notice this? The child uses two hands to complete the activity instead of only the dominant hand. It's mostly noticeable when children are doing a printing activity and I have placed the printing pads on the opposite side of the dominant hand. The child places the printing gadget in the left hand, dips it in the paint and then changes over to the right hand in order to be able to cross their midline and do the print. I was doing an activity where the children were cutting brown paper into smaller pieces to use to collage a tree. The pile of cut pieces was on the opposite side of the dominant hand (the one they usually use to write and draw with). She picked up a piece of paper of the paper in her left hand, switched it to her right hand before crossing the midline to place the piece on the collage. It can be clearly seen in these two photos below. In the peg board pictures the child put a handful of pegs into his hand to avoid crossing his midline



A simple way to encourage midline crossing is to place the printing pad on the opposite side of the child's dominant hand. Each time they place the printing item onto the paint they cross the imaginary line in their body and print on the paper. There are many other ways to develop and practice midline crossing which you can find in the links below.

<http://www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com/activities-for-crossing-the-midline.html>

<https://www.growinghandsonkids.com/crossing-midline-exercises-for-kids.html>

<https://teachmama.com/five-activities-crossing-midline-important/>

### What does crossing the midline mean?

We all have an imaginary line down the centre of the body dividing the body into the left and right side. Crossing the midline is the ability of a child to cross over this line spontaneously and naturally with a body part usually the hand and arm or the foot and leg to the other side of the body.

A child who is unable to cross their midline will experience difficulty with formal learning. When you write on a page you start from the left side and move across the page to the right side. If you are unable to cross the midline you will struggle with this simple process. The same goes for reading. The eyes cross the midline to start reading on the left side of the page and cross over the midline as you read to the right side. A child who struggles to cross over their midline will experience difficulty following the words across the line. These are just a few examples of when you cross your midline when doing basic learning. Most of the time it happens without the child even being aware of it!

If a child avoids crossing the mid-line, then both hands tend to get equal practice at developing skills and the child's true handedness may be delayed. This means that once a child starts school, learning to write is much more difficult when they have two less skilled hands rather than one stronger, more skilled (dominant) hand. Difficulty crossing the mid-line also makes it difficult to visually track a moving object from one side to the other or track from left to right when reading, meaning reading can also be delayed.

<http://www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com/crossing-the-midline.html>

## Creative activities

### Spring blossom trees – collage with printed blossoms

With spring in the air the town where I teach has many cherry blossom trees in bloom so the children are very aware of the blossom trees. So I presented a few different spring blossom tree activities for the week.

While these are spring trees and by the time this newsletter goes out to you spring will be over, these same activities can be applied to summer trees with a few changes.



I saw an idea on Pinterest where the teacher tied a few earbuds together with an elastic band to create a printing gadget to print the blossoms. I liked the idea because it was a bit different and I loved the effect it made. Finger printing will also be effective if you don't have access to earbuds.

I found five or six earbuds was a good number.  
I changed the colour of the paint as this was too red.

**Making pink paint:** When you make pink paint it's best to use white paint and very slowly add red paint mixing well until you have the pink you require. If you start with red paint you will need to add a huge amount of white paint to create pink. This activity will work well with food colouring if you don't have access to paint.



**Themes:** Flowers, gardens, trees, spring and summer if you make a few changes.

#### You will need:

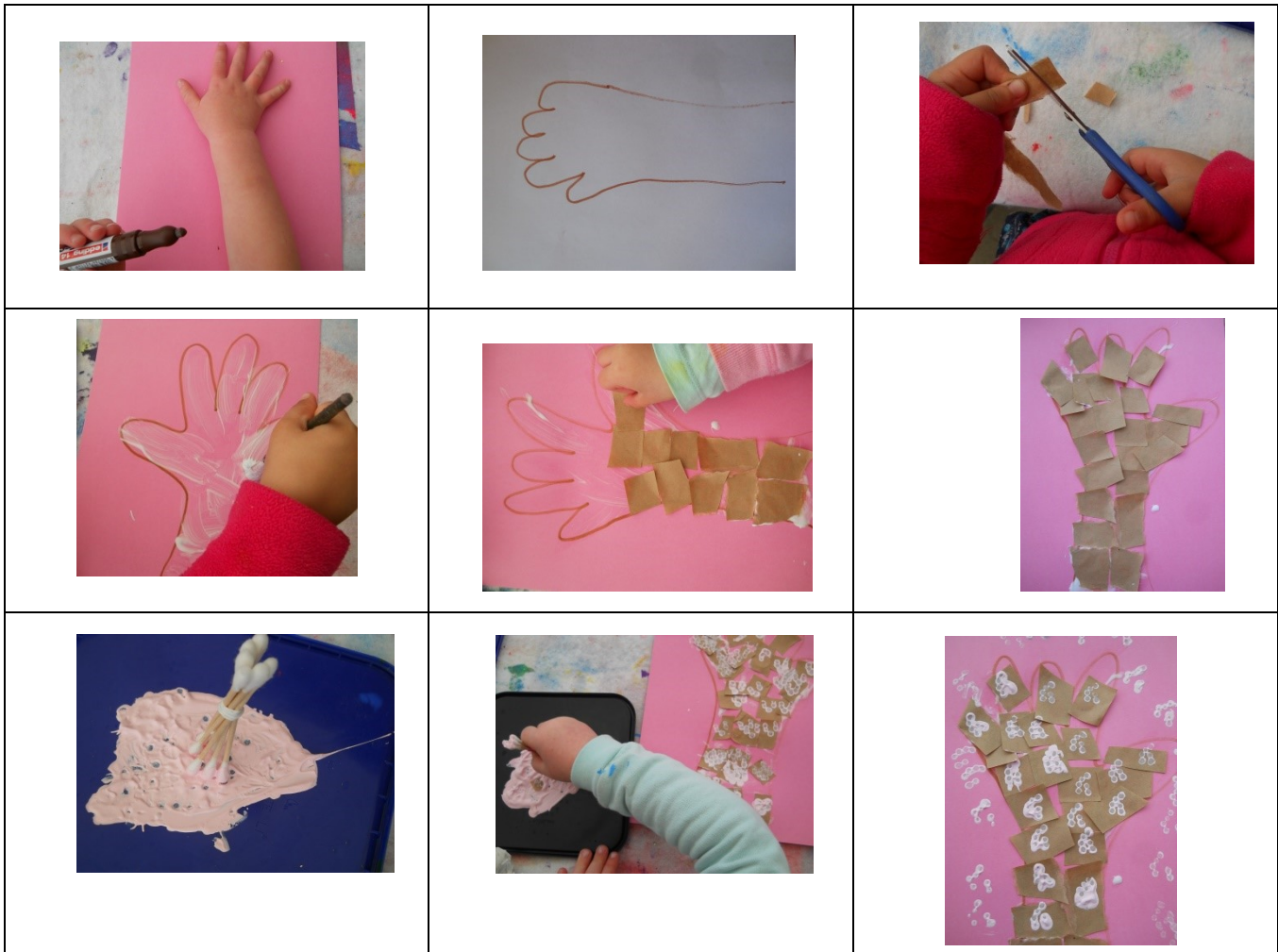
- White or pink paper
- Glue and glue brushes
- Koki pen or wax crayon to trace the arm
- Scissors
- Brown paper cut into strips about 1 cm wide
- Earbuds tied in bundles of 6 with an elastic band
- Pink paint on a flat container such as an ice cream lid



#### Method:

The child places their arm and hand (with open fingers) on the paper and the teacher traces around the hand creating a tree outline. The child cuts some strips of paper into smaller pieces. The child puts glue on a small area of the tree trunk and fills in the outline with the small squares of brown paper. Once the tree trunk and branches are filled in the child uses the earbud bundle to print the blossoms around the tree.

**Note: Summer trees:** Print leaves instead of blossoms. Use a slightly flattened toilet roll to create leaf shapes. Or use the earbuds with green paint.



### Notes:

- Remind the children to stay within the tree outline when using the brown paper
- Most children can't trace their own hands
- I found the light pink printed blossom more effective on a pink background
- Encourage the children to only fill a small area with glue and then paste the brown paper.
- There are many options for filling in the tree trunk other than with brown paper.
- The paper can be torn if there are no scissors but I found the children really struggled to tear the paper. It was quite thick brown paper so perhaps thinner brown paper would be more effective for tearing. For the younger age group you could cut the squares for the children. We used scissors.
- The children printed blossoms all over the tree including the tree trunk. To prevent this happening again I decided to only do a branch of a tree for the next activity!

### Blossom branches – using collage

After noticing that all the children printed the blossoms on their trees and around the whole tree I thought I would try a different approach and create a blossom branch. It had varying levels of success!!

I saw an activity on pinterest where they used twigs cut from trees which they attached to the paper with cellotape. I adapted the activity to use wooden sucker sticks for the branches. I liked the effect. They do need to be secured with cellotape although they will stick with glue but will need to be dried flat and carried carefully to the drying area so the sticks don't fall off before they have dried.



**Themes:** Flowers, gardens, spring and summer if you use green tissue paper to be leaves instead of blossoms.

## You will need:

- White paper
- Glue and glue brushes
- Cellotape
- Pink tissue paper cut into squares
- Wooden sucker sticks



## Method:

The children selected some wooden sticks and secured them to the paper using cellotape or glue as a tree branch. They crumpled the squares of the tissue paper into balls and pasted them to the branch as the blossoms. Remind the children to put the glue on the blossom ball and not on the paper. Encourage them to fill the branches with blossoms.









## Notes:

- I cut pieces of Cellotape and attached them around the edge of an ice cream container so everyone could reach
- You need to use tissue paper and not crepe paper as the colour runs in the crepe paper
- You will get a variety of branches
- Younger children struggle to crumple the paper
- Instead of using pink paper use green for summer trees or autumn colour for an autumn tree
- Instead of making a branch you can do a tree



## Variation on spring trees

Using a combination of tracing the hand and arm for the tree and the sucker sticks for branches you can make a different tree. To extend the activity and to create texture to the tree trunk the children used pot scourers to paint the tree trunk. Place the paint on a flat lid for this painting activity.

		
		
<p>Secure bubble wrap around the base of a hard tube to use to print the blossoms</p>	<p>I would suggest you do this over two days as the wet brown paint taints the blossoms</p>	

## Sunflowers (flowers) – printed with toilet rolls and painted

I liked this activity as it required the children to use some good fine motor skills to paint carefully within the lines. The end result boosted the children's confidence. Any colour can be used to create flowers. I would not do this activity as is with the younger children but they could enjoy printing petals on paper



**Themes:** Flowers, colour yellow, summer, any colour theme – just change the colour of the paint.

### You will need:

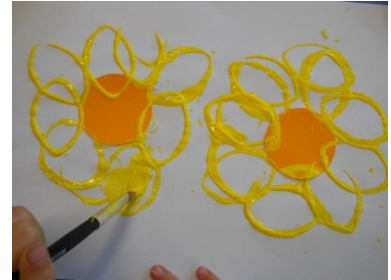
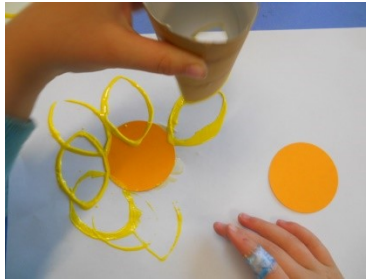
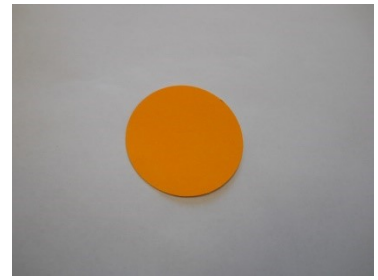
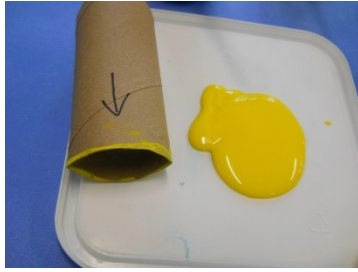
- White paper
- Yellow paint in a flat container such as an ice cream lid and in a paint pot
- Toilet rolls – preferably the firmer ones
- Yellow paper circles for the centres
- Brown or black paint for the centres
- Optional: earbuds
- Glue and glue brushes
- Paint brushes



**Note:** Gently squash the toilet roll flat at opposite sides by pinching the edges together and ending up with a petal shape. See the first picture in the table below.

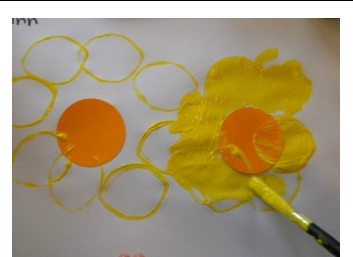
### Method:

The children pasted the coloured paper circle to their paper. I marked two dots on the paper so we could easily place two flowers on a page. I encouraged the children to put the glue onto the paper circle. Using the squashed toilet roll the children printed petals around the circle. Remind the children to dip the toilet roll into the paint often. Once the petals are printed the children carefully paint the petals using the yellow paint. To create the flower centres the children painted brown or black paint dots using the earbuds. Finger prints will be just as effective.



### Notes:

- Some children struggled to keep the petals close to the centre
- Some children overlapped the petals a bit too much but it was still effective. It just made painting the petals a bit messy
- I used a paper punch to make the circle centres but you could also trace a circle onto the paper ahead of time
- The flowers can be any colour to match a theme
- Printing provides a good opportunity for mid line crossing



## Plastic plate painting and printing

This is a fun activity to do that suits a variety of drawing levels from scribbling to clear drawings as they all make good prints. It works best when the plate is just covered with paint versus blobs of excess paint and if there is insufficient paint then you don't get a clear print. I encouraged the children to cover the plate base only with a good amount of paint and to then create a flat surface by brushing the paint in stripes from left to right so there is a smooth surface to draw on. It's not critical to the end result but it does improve the print. This activity lends itself to many themes by altering the colour of the paint and what you ask the children to draw.

**Themes:** Shape – circle, colours, relate the drawing to the theme of choice, summer – use yellow paint and draw suns or flowers, myself using the circle of the plate as the face and adding face features.

### You will need:

- Plastic plates – disposable ones ( not paper)
- Paint – ready mixed works well
- Paint brushes
- Earbuds or sticks
- Paper

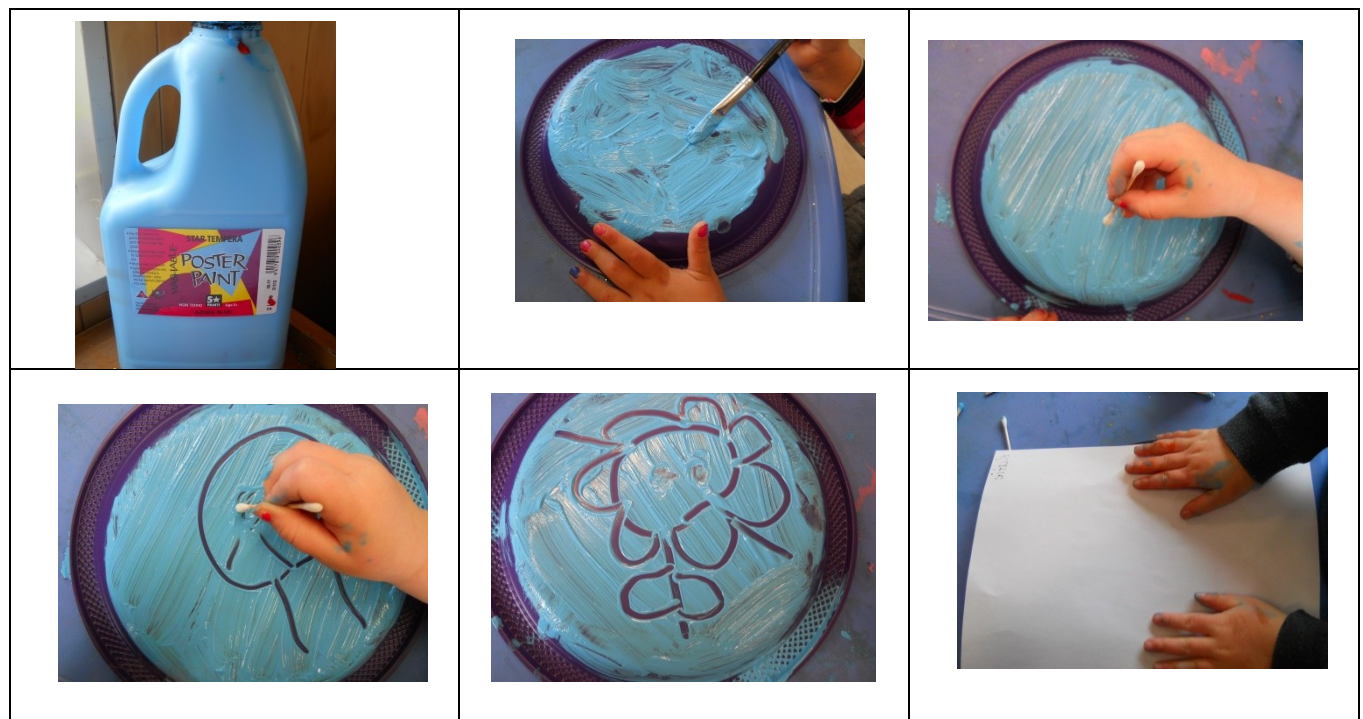


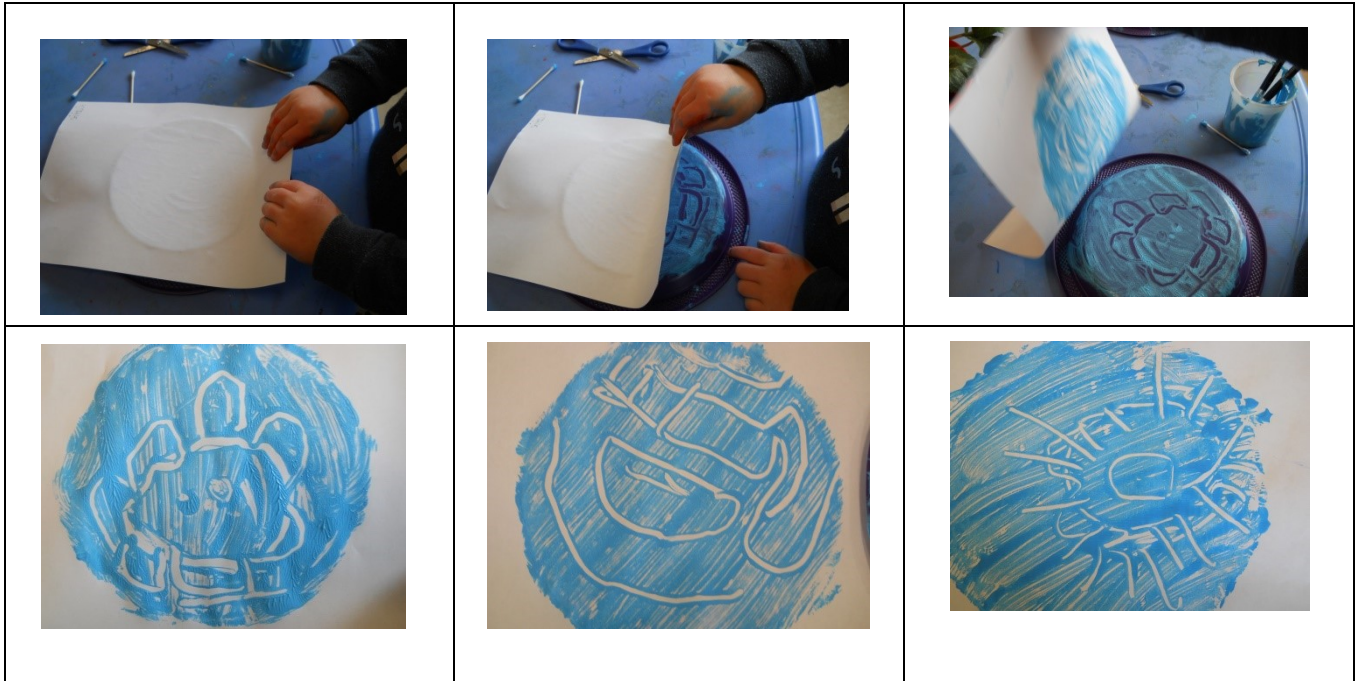
### Method:

The children paint the bottom of the plastic plate so it's well covered. They then paint over the paint from side to side to create a smooth well covered area. Using an earbud or stick (or finger!) the children draw a picture. Once the picture is complete, the child carefully places a piece of paper onto the drawing and gently rubs the paper to pick up a print. The child carefully lifts off the paper to reveal a print of their drawing.

To make another picture paint the plate again and draw a new picture

**Note:** No plastic plates? Use the bottom of a polystyrene tray or a 2 litre milk bottle on its side with the label removed. My plastic plates were purple but any colour is fine.





**Notes:**

- This does need some teacher supervision for the first time. After that the children managed on their own. I did keep an eye to check that they were rubbing enough before lifting the paper for the print.
- Too much paint doesn't allow for clear lines when drawing
- Too little paint and it also doesn't print clearly
- It didn't matter what the children drew, it was all effective
- Some children painted the rim of the paper plate and not only the base. It's not a problem but makes the plate messy to handle.
- Drawing with their finger will work well too but then hands will need to be wiped before they can do the print



Happy teaching

Regards  
Karin

PS this is not me in the photo but happens to me more often than I would like to admit!

Me: ok im feeling really motivated, when I get home im going to sort my life out, get all my work done, & be successful

Me when I get home:

