

Preschool Themes Newsletter – October 2018

Hello Everyone,

I have returned from a wonderful visit to South Africa visiting family and friends so it's back to settling into the normal routine of daily life once again. Sigh!

Our preschool is semi-rural so we have a super large play area alongside our regular play space which we call a paddock. It used to have cows grazing on it, but it has been developed into a nature play based area with play equipment made from wood. We also have a 'fire pit' and logs arranged around this area for the children to sit on and eat lunch. Every Friday we go into the paddock from about 11 am until about 2.30 with two groups joined together. Each week one group of teachers is responsible for cooking lunch for the children on the open fire. We mostly don't braai – it's more pot cooking food such as spaghetti bolognese, risotto, soup, fire bread, eggs etc.

It is very interesting to watch the children playing with the many loose parts we have placed in the area and I have included some photos of this play. We consider the outdoor play area as the third teacher.



Loose parts play in action outdoors

In the March newsletter, which can be accessed through the web site www.preschoolthemes.co.za under the newsletter tab, I discussed the idea of loose parts play. Here are some photos of loose parts play in the outdoor area. The children have access to large concrete building blocks, pieces of wood and logs, random pieces such as an old steering wheel, planks, old pallets and crates to mention a few. The children are free to choose what and how they play with the materials. The teacher's role is to keep them safe but at the same time allow for a fair amount of risk taking such as carrying heavy concrete blocks or stacking heavy logs in a tower. This kind of play allows for a lot of collaboration, team work, sharing and communicating ideas with risk taking and exploration of science concepts.





As usual I have been busy presenting many creative activities to the children. I hope you enjoy the ideas.

Creative activities

Ballerina with cupcake cases

Theme: Circus

Other themes: Can be adapted for my family

Ages: 4 - 5 year olds

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

Materials:

- Paper cup cake cases
- Wooden sucker sticks – wide is better
- Glue and glue brushes
- Koki pens
- Pipe cleaners
- A 4 paper
- Optional – wool or crepe paper for hair and stars



Method:

The children select a pipe cleaner for the arms and with some teacher help the pipe cleaner is wound around the wooden stick once to secure it. The children paste the stick to the centre of the horizontal paper placing the glue on the stick and not the paper. The children fold a paper cupcake case in half and paste the skirt to the stick body. The children draw a face and ballet shoes using the koki pens. Hair can be added with wool, cut pipe cleaners or strips of crepe paper. The children add details to the picture such as a stage, curtains and backdrops.





Notes:

- Some children needed help with attaching the arms to the wooden sucker stick
- Encourage the children to name the ballerina and to tell you a story about them
- Some children chose to make butterflies as part of the backdrop of the stage
- A few children asked for help to draw the stage curtains.
- The stage curtains can be replaced with a big top tent for the circus theme
- Remind the children to leave space for the ballet shoes when pasting the skirt.

My home using fabric scraps and drawing

Theme: My home

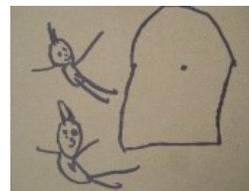
Other themes: My family

Ages: 3 - 5 year olds

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

Materials:

- Fabric cut into small squares
- Glue and glue brushes – white paint can be added to the glue
- Lightweight cardboard or cereal boxes
- Koki pens or crayons – black is effective



Method:

Teacher: Prepare a house shape using one side of a cereal box. Cut the fabric into small squares. The children draw windows and doors on their house shape. Encourage them to add people to their homes. The children 'paint' the house with the white glue and then place fabric square on the glue around the windows, doors and people.





Notes:

- Some children covered the drawn items with the fabric squares
- Some children used a lot of glue
- Some children were excessive with fabric squares and just pasted many squares
- Younger children may scribble instead doing clear drawings.



Name alphabet letters – covered with fabric squares

Still using the fabric squares we covered the first letter of our name with them. I cut out the first letter of the children's names on lightweight card and the children filled them in with fabric squares.

Theme: Big school

Other themes: Letters, books

Ages: 4 - 5 year olds

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

Materials:

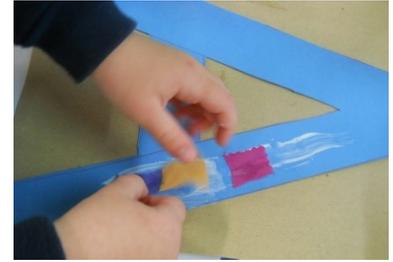
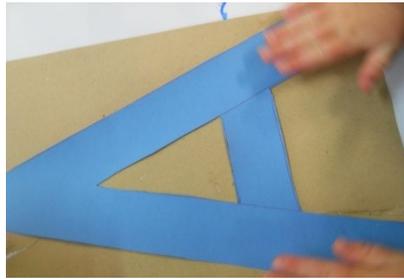
- Fabric cut into small squares
- Glue and glue brushes
- Lightweight cardboard or cereal boxes
- Optional: piece of paper to paste the alphabet letter to



Method:

Teacher: Prepare and cut out an alphabet letter for each child using the first letter of their names. If the children can cut their own letter out then give them an outline.

The children spread glue on the alphabet letter and paste squares of fabric covering the whole shape. I let the children paste their shape to another background paper for stability first, but I suggest you do it afterwards as some children pasted squares to the background paper too. Remind the children not to overlap the fabric squares too much as it gets heavy and messy.



Notes:

- Some children pasted fabric squares on the background paper. I suggest you paste the fabric squares on the letter before pasting it to a background paper
- Don't cut the squares too big or they will hang off the edge of the letter
- No fabric – use newspaper or coloured paper squares (see next activity for an idea with newspaper squares that will work well here too)
- Prepare the letters ahead of the lesson using a ruler to draw the letters



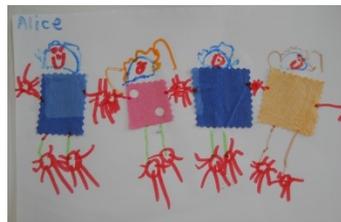
My family – using fabric pieces for the body and drawing

This next activity was an extension of using the fabric pieces. The children loved creating their family using the fabric pieces for the body of their people. It was a great opportunity to add some drawing to the art activity. I love the way they turned out. This activity is best suited to the older children who can draw people and are past the scribble stage. For the younger children let them paste squares to a page and paint either the squares or the spaces between the fabric squares. Include some crayons to encourage some drawing opportunities too.

Themes: My family

You will need:

- Fabric squares – about 4 x 7 cm
- Glue and glue brushes
- Paper or lightweight card
- Koki pens or wax crayons



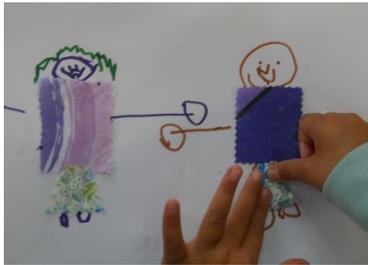
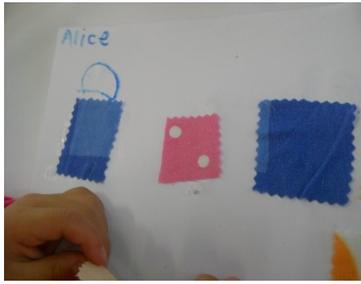
Method:

Teacher: Prepare the fabric squares

The children select fabric squares for the body of the people or persons they wish to create. Suggest they make their family. The children paste the squares to the paper and the rest of the body and details are drawn with the crayons or koki pens. The teacher can name each person to encourage literacy.

Optional: Cut some of the fabric pieces into skirt and hand bag shapes





Notes:

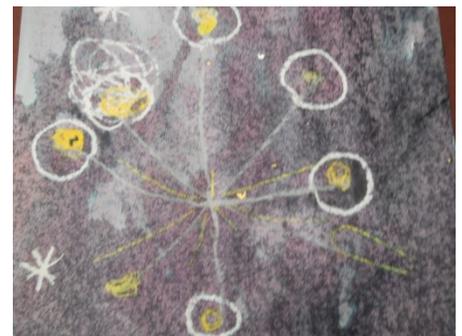
- Encourage the children to put the glue on the fabric and not on the paper
- Have a variety of colours for the bodies
- Encourage the children to add detail to their drawings

Magic paintings – wax crayon resist painting

When I put out this activity I did not realise how much the younger children would struggle to draw a star. Even after showing them how to draw a basic line star many children still only scribbled. In hindsight now I would have given them a star shaped paper and encouraged them to colour it in, draw on it and draw a line along the edge to frame the star.

You will need:

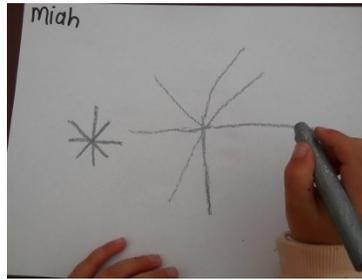
- White paper
- Wax crayons – white, yellow, silver and black
- Black food colouring
- Paint brushes
- Optional : Star shaped paper



Method:

Teacher: Dilute the black food colouring and check that it is not too dark or light.

The children draw pictures of stars and moons using the wax crayons. They paint over the wax crayons using the diluted black food colouring covering the whole page. The picture can be framed and displayed with silver paper as in the printing with cookie cutter activity later in the newsletter



Notes:

- Younger children struggle to draw stars so encourage them to 'scribble' and then label their drawings with the wax crayons
- Test the concentration of the black food colouring before giving it to the children.
- Encourage the children to cover the whole paper with black colouring
- No wax crayons – use candles
- Make sure all the drawing is complete before painting over the crayon



Night skies with stars

We were given these cardboard circles from a parent just as I was thinking of doing a starry night scene so they were ideal for this, especially since they are a heavy weight to carry all the paint and collage. I don't know what they were used for.



Theme: Night and day

Other themes: Stars, Planets

Ages: 3 - 5 year olds

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

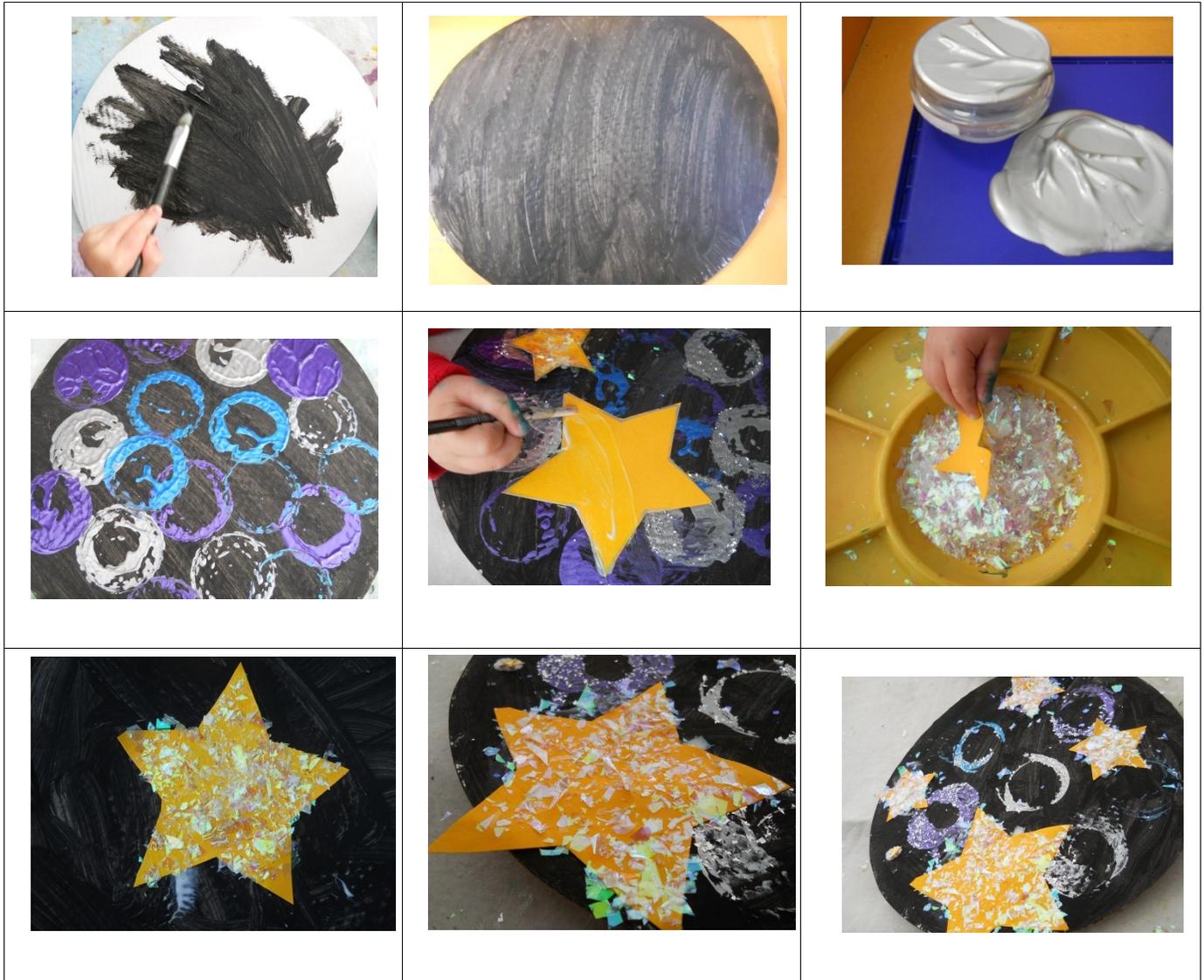
Materials:

- Cardboard – I used circles but any cardboard such as cereal boxes will be fine
- Black paint
- Paint – silver, blue and purple on flat lids such as ice cream container lids
- Glitter
- Glue
- Coffee jar lids – Mocona
- Stars – cut out in yellow cardboard in 2 or 3 sizes
- Shiny plastic glitter or glitter

Method:**Teacher:** Cut out stars

The children paint the cardboard black and leave to dry. Using the coffee jar lids place them in the paint, then turn them as you print with them on the cardboard. Add a little silver glitter while the paint is wet. Complete the stars by spreading glue on the one side, pressing them into the shiny plastic and then pasting them onto the printed background.

If you choose to hang these as mobiles paint the back black and sprinkle with glitter.

**Notes:**

- Give this activity enough time for each process to dry properly
- No shiny plastic snow – use glitter or salt or Epsom salts or cut up tin foil into pieces
- No silver paint – use white paint
- No Moconna lids for painting – use milk lids or jar lids

Printing stars with cookie cutters, filling with paint using ear buds and completing a shiny border

For this activity I bought a cheap plastic graded set of star cookie cutters. These worked really well for printing as they have a thick plastic edge. I had a few moon shaped cutters from the play dough table. I tried to glue the black paper to the background paper but for some unknown reason it just would not stick. And the long armed stapler had taken a walk!! So I just sticky taped the printed paper to the background paper.

I cut up some silver wrapping paper into squares and triangles but one of



the papers kept curling up and frustrating the children. It was my intention for the children to do patterning as a border but this activity was being done for a Maori New year's celebration and the day we completed them ended up in chaos so the children just pasted them as they pleased. This was my example above and is a great opportunity for the older children to create a pattern before pasting the shapes.

Theme: Day and night

Other themes: Stars and moon, night skies

Ages: 3 - 5 year olds

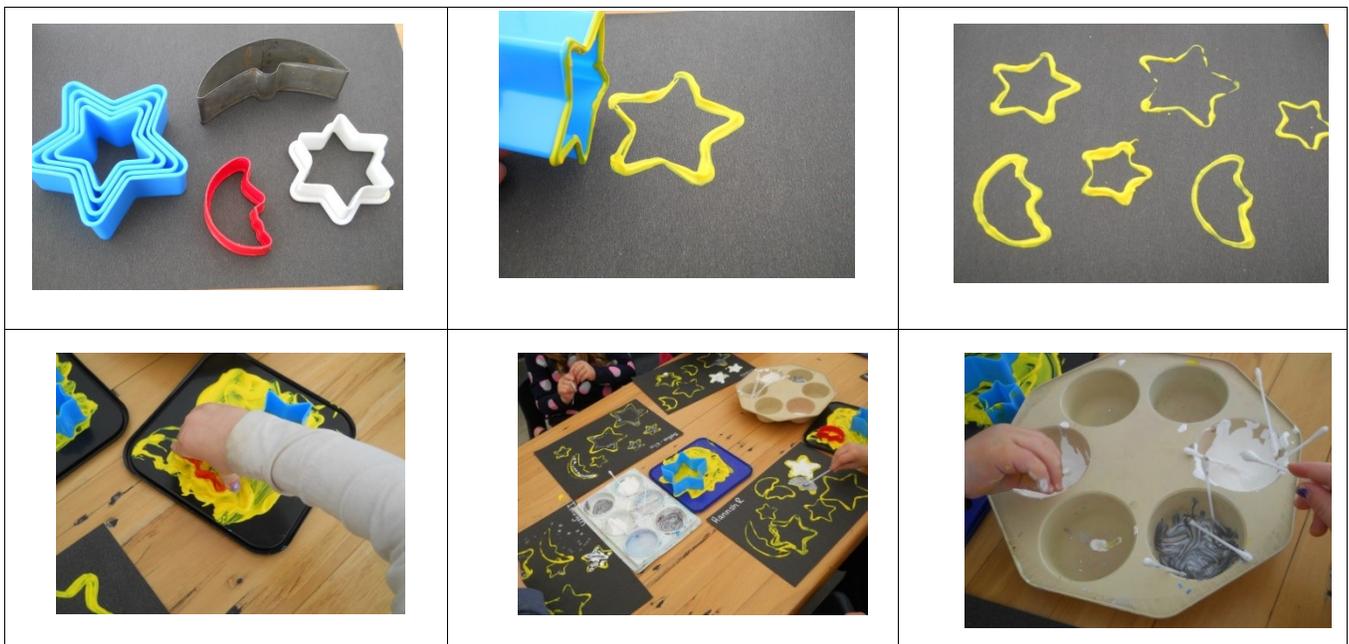
Skills: Small and large muscles, eye hand co-ordination

Materials:

- Plastic star cookie cutters, moon shaped cutters
- Yellow paint on flat lids
- Earbuds
- White and silver paint in small containers
- Black A4 paper
- A3 paper for the background – coloured or white
- Shiny wrapping paper – cut into squares and triangles
- Glue and glue brushes
-

Method:

The children dip the cookie cutter into the paint and make a print on the black paper. Repeat with prints until the page is covered without overlapping the prints. Using the earbuds fill in the centre of the prints with dots of white paint. Some children painted with the earbuds and white paint. Once the painting is dry attach the painting to a larger A3 paper and create a border. Using pre-cut shiny wrapping paper the children paste the shapes around the painting. I used coloured paper for the background but white is fine too.





Notes:

- Some children smeared the paint instead of doing dots
- Instead of adding glue to each piece of silver paper it's easier for the children to smear glue on the border and paste the shapes around the painting
- There was some over printing and excessive printing
- Discourage the children from banging the cookie cutters on the paper when printing. Demonstrate how to place it carefully on the paper and press down firmly before lifting it up and repeating in another place
- Plastic microwave containers are great for a paint container for earbud painting.



Theme: Day and night

I used black paper for the star background but any colour can be used. I cut the stars for the children but if you have the older children then set cutting out as one table.

Other themes: Stars and moon, night skies

Ages: 3 - 5 year olds

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

Materials:

- A3 paper



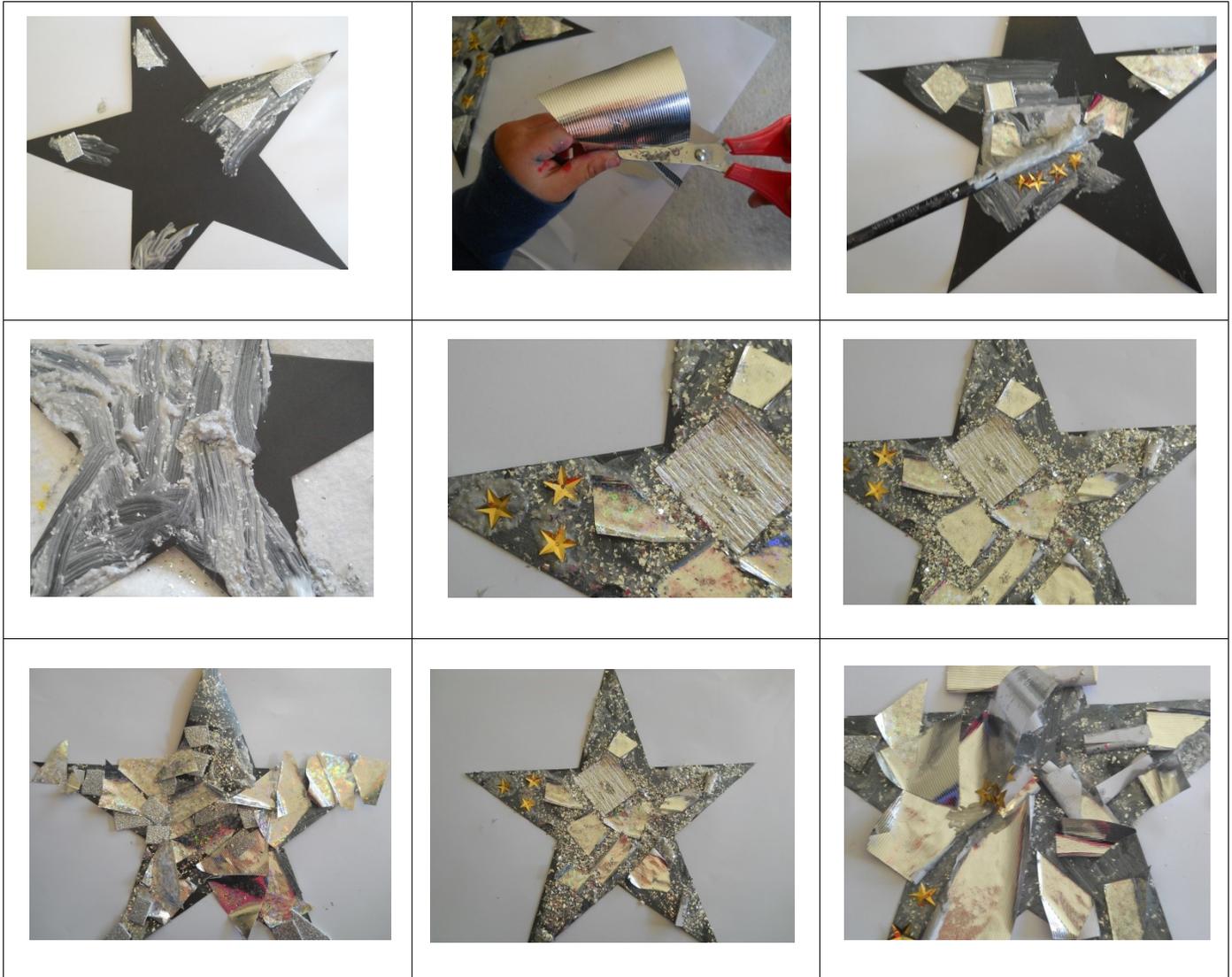
- Star template
- Collage material – silver shiny paper, glittered paper, stars, packaging paper
- Glue and glue brushes
- Stars
- Optional: Scissors



Method:

Teacher: Cut out the star shapes. Add glitter to the glue. Prepare collage materials. The children paste glue to a small area of the star and paste collage material. Once the star is covered with collage materials gently sprinkle with some silver glitter. I prefer to do this myself as the children are excessive and often the glitter all ends up in one place. Leave to dry overnight. These can be hung as a mobile.

Optional: I set out scissors for the children to cut their own shapes or cut pre-cut shapes smaller. I left some collage paper in larger sizes. Be aware that some children may spend all their time cutting everything into small useless pieces so supervise and remove the scissors if this is happening.



Notes:

- Some children were excessive with the collage materials
- Some of the metallic wrapping paper curled up and did not stick
- No black paper – paint the paper ahead of time or use white paper

Happy teaching

Regards Karin

