

Newsletter - October 2012



Here we are in the 10th month of the year with the end of the year madness just around the corner. Hang in there! It's all worthwhile when you see how much the children have grown and developed. By now the weather should be nice and warm so use it to create lots of fun outdoor learning opportunities for the children. Don't forget hats for sun protection. If you do get a holiday break now enjoy it.

New CAPS outcomes

I have posted some more CAPS outcomes on the web site to paste over the existing outcomes in the theme books. They can be found at www.preschoolthemes.co.za under the heading CAPS outcomes.

I have also posted the three subjects of Home language, Mathematics and Life Skills there too for quick and easy access.

End of year concerts

I have had a request for nice end of year concerts/presentations to do with the children. If you have used one that worked well please share it with me. Also if you have a web site or a book with nativity plays that work well I would love to know about them. rodandkarin@xtra.co.nz or use the preschool Facebook page

Practicing for end of year concerts can raise the stress levels of the most patient teachers. Try to stay calm. Rather practice for shorter periods so the children don't get too tired, bored or frustrated. Remember they are only little and waiting around for their turn to perform can be boring. Try to practice earlier in the day before it's too hot and they are too tired. If you are having a lot of behaviour problems at concert practice time, you may need to be reassessing your plan. Concerts are supposed to be fun and a few mistakes here and there is not the end of the world. In fact that's what makes them cute.

Reading – sight words

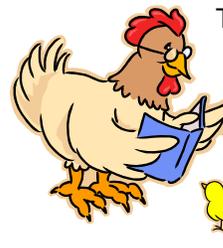


I qualified as a junior primary teacher and I taught grade 2 for a short while before changing to preschool education. Knowing what the children need to have in place to be successful learners has been a great asset to my preschool teaching. I know what perceptual and readiness skills the children need to have in place before starting formal schooling.

All learning requires reading including maths! Confident readers do much better at school and have a happier school life.

So why not do all we can to give them a head start, confidence in their own ability and nurture a love of words and reading.

I am not going to detail all the complexities of the various skills needed to read with ease, but one skill we teach is sight words. These 220 words (Dolch sight words) are the most frequent words seen when reading and most of them cannot be sounded out phonetically. These words need to be learned 'off by heart' through repetitive exposure and recognised on sight. Examples of some these words are; the, when, her, out etc.



The more of these words the child knows and can read without 'thinking' about them, the better the child will read and with more fluency, speed and better understanding.

I am a great believer of introducing these words in a very informal way to the oldest preschool children so they have a big head start when they start grade 1. **I know it's not in the CAPS curriculum** but if you do it slowly and often many children will learn to 'read' several of them. Keeping this learning fun and varied is the key idea.

How should I introduce these words?

Write the words on flashcards and at the beginning or end of a ring or mat time show the words to the learners, tell them what the words say and ask them to repeat them. Do this each day for a week or two and I assure you by the end of the time there will be several children who can 'read' all the words. I suggest you only do **five words at a time**. Each week choose five new words even if they don't know all the previous weeks' five words. Once you have got through all the words on a list go back and repeat the process of 5 words per week again before moving onto the next list. Add the five words to the theme table or reading corner.

Do not force children to learn sight words

The List of the 220 Dolch sight words can be found at these two sites. The words are listed in different ways such as by grade or frequency seen.

<http://www.theschoolbell.com/Links/Dolch/Dolch.html>

<http://www.mrsperkins.com/dolch.htm>

This site has the words already printed as flashcards for you print and cut apart.

This site has the words in very easy to use lists

<http://www.schoolsparks.com/early-childhood-development/letter-word-awareness>

Visual discrimination – matching letters

I have a set of alphabet letters on small cards. If I remember correctly they were purchased from Smile education, but I am sure you can make them or buy some from an educational toy shop. I used these for a visual discrimination activity with the 2 - 3 year olds –



they did not need to know the letters but they could match the same 'shapes'. The older children knew some of the letters and we talked about them as we matched them, looking for words that start with the letter they matched.

Printing with Lego blocks



It's always a good idea to try and use your existing resources in different ways. I was looking for a different printing activity for the 2 - 3 year olds so I set out printing pads and Lego blocks to print shapes and dots. Printing

with the younger age group doesn't always work out the way you planned!

Don't let that stress you, so much of the creative process at this age is enjoying and experiencing the materials.

One little boy was not at all interested in using the blocks to print. He just wanted to build towers with the blocks and caused some friction at the printing table as he kept taking everyone's blocks they were printing with!



Eventually I sent him to wash his hands and put the balance of the Lego blocks on the mat for him to build with. Needless to say he did not have any prints on his page, but he had his own fun.

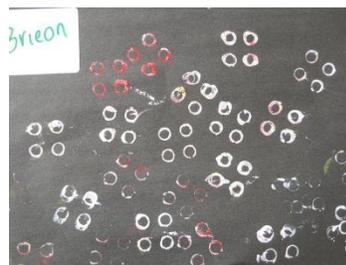
Some children try to 'paint' with the printing materials. Again it's all good, but I just demonstrate the process to them again.



And you can be sure someone will pull the paint soaked sponges out of the container and try and paint with that. I have tried printing without the sponge pads but it's not as effective.

Notes:

- Keep extra paint nearby to top up the sponge pads. They dry out quickly.
- Keep the paint on the thinner side.
- Never place paint brushes near the table.



- Restrict the paint colours to max 3 and make sure they mix together to make new colours and not a brown muddy messy colour.
- Mid line crossing: This is a very important skill so encourage this crossing over by placing the printing pad on the left side if right handed and reversed for left handed children.

Guitars



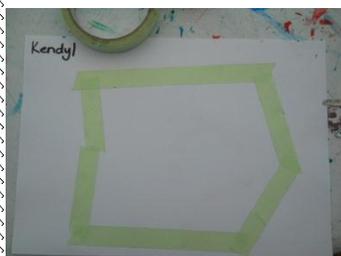
These were made by the preschool group. I did not make them with the children but I thought it was a great idea. They used cotton wool balls for the tuners and wool for the strings. The guitars were hung from the roof to display them. I thought they were most effective.

Masking tape pictures

I saw a similar idea on pinterest and lucky for me my hubby had bought a roll of low tack masking tape in error so he was throwing it out.

The children were each given a strip of tape and they cut pieces off and pasted them to their paper.

The younger children absolutely love anything that sticks! They cut endless pieces and pasted them to their paper.



The whole page was painted and left to dry. Once dry the children carefully pulled the tape off exposing the white paper underneath.



The older children tried to create pictures and one horse-mad little girl created a super 5 legged horse with her tape.

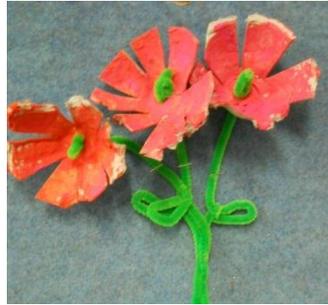


Notes:

- Sometimes the tape pulled the paper off too.
- Encourage the children to complete the tape pasting before starting to paint. If possible have them at separate tables.
- I would wait a day for the paint to be completely dry and pull off the tape the next day.
- This should work with regular masking tape too.

Egg box flowers

With spring and warmer weather here we decided to make some egg box flowers. This worked well for the 2-3 year olds. I think the older children can be challenged much more to create their own flowers and stems as a collage (spring theme book)



I cut egg boxes into segments and cut down to the base to create petals. Some 4 year olds could do this by themselves.



The children painted the flowers, we left them to dry overnight and I completed them with a green pipe cleaner stem.

Notes:

- Some children piled the thick paint into the centre of the flower which I had to spread out. Prevent this by making the paint a bit thinner.
- Many did not paint the back of the flowers which is fine.
- Make sure your colours mix well. I put out pink and orange paint and we ended up with pinky orange. Next time I would just use yellow so they looked like daffodils which are all in flower at the moment. (Didn't have any that day!)
- Make sure you have lots of flowers as several children wanted to paint many. Or give them the other part of the egg box to paint to keep them happy.
- The children could paint a yogurt container and you can punch holes and display the flowers.

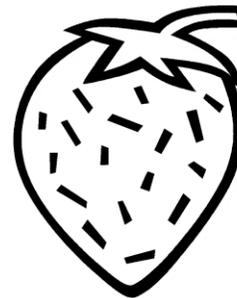


Girl power – painting the wooden house

At our preschool we have a wooden framed house which the children love to work on. They happily hammer new pieces of wood to the structure; attach pieces of carpet samples and fabric and wood strips for the roof. Last week about 8 girls in the preschool group decided they wanted to give the house a new coat of paint. They painted for about an hour and had lots of fun. They took turns sharing, cooperating in the small space, taking risks standing on small chairs and despite quite a few painted jackets and heads they loved every minute of it. It was a coincidence that it ended up being a group of girls, but it's great to see them involved in this type of activity which is traditionally seen as a boy's activity.



Counting rhyme



Five Red Strawberries

Five red strawberries, sweet to the core
Bear came and ate one and then there were four.
Four red strawberries, growing near a tree
Bear came and ate one and then there were three.
Three red strawberries, for you and you and you
Bear came and ate one, and then there were two.
Two red strawberries, sitting in the sun
Bear came and ate one and then there was one.
One red strawberry, left all alone.
Bear came and ate it and then there were none.
(use a soft toy bear which a child holds and removes one strawberry each time)

Happy teaching Regards Karin