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Preschool Themes Newsletter – September 2015

Hello Everyone,

Life has resumed some sense of normality since returning from my overseas trip but I am still struggling to adapt to the cold and wet weather of NZ. Today is officially the start of spring and I hope your day is sunny and warm. Spring is a good time to do some spring cleaning by giving your classroom an extra clean and tidy up and to reorganise areas that are not working well. Too many resources can overwhelm the children and make tidy up time challenging. With the warmer weather it's a great time to have a good look at the outdoor area and to add some new and fun activities to this area. Don't overlook spring cleaning the sand pit toys and throw away any cracked, broken or rusted toys. A clean, well-organised classroom helps make the day flow well and children thrive in the structured predictable environment.



hello
sunshine

Concert book

After endless research and pursuing various options to get around the copyright issue of the songs in the concerts I have come to the decision that it is too complicated and expensive. I cannot sell a book that uses songs written by others without their permission and of course paying a fee to use them. Most concerts are made up of songs so this was the main issue for me. At times it's hard to even know who actually wrote the song in the first place. I know many of you will be disappointed as I am. Susan has gone to a lot of trouble to share some of her concert for the book and she is happy for me to send the concerts to you if you would like them.

If you have written any concerts and you are happy to share them with other teachers please e mail them to me. They will be passed onto interested teachers at no cost.

(I still have a few from the last time I put out this request)

If you would like some concerts sent to you please e mail me at rodandkarin@xtra.co.nz and I will forward them to you. They will be unedited and sent as they were sent to me. It may take a week or so for all the potential concerts to be sent to me before I send them to you.

Pinterest

I don't know if some of you have noticed some changes to your pinterest feeds lately. I had and seeing boards and pins I have not chosen to follow was annoying me so much I googled the issue. It seems like Pinterest has made some changes and people can select you to follow them even though you have not followed them. This result in lots and lots of pins about things I am so not interested in and it wastes my time wading through them all. They are also selecting pins based on what you search for and these pins say "picked for you". If you want this to stop, go into your pinterest profile and settings and change these settings below to say no. It helps a lot. More importantly I need you to know it's nothing I am doing.



- **Personalization**

We sometimes show you Promoted Pins and recommendations based on your activity on Pinterest. Is it okay if we:

No



Also use sites you've visited recently? [Learn more](#)

No



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Art activities

We have had lots of fun trying out new art activities and techniques at school. Most of these ideas are sourced from Pinterest.

As you have probably noticed my art activities are random and not theme related. This is not by my choice but rather how the system works here in NZ. I found it very frustrating when I started teaching here but I had to make the choice to either accept it and go with the flow or leave teaching. They work with very broad open ended themes such as exploration or communication as examples. And since I am not at school every day I just choose creative activities and process art which I know the children will enjoy. So if some of you have been wondering why I don't do theme related art activities together in a newsletter this is the reason. We also work with an open ended art area at our school so many art materials are available to all the children throughout the day to explore as they please. I am in favour of this concept for many reasons but it does result in the children "adding their own ideas" to some of my art activities and I just go with the flow when this happens. The process is always the most important aspect of creative activities.

Wooden sucker stick family collage with drawing

I loved the way this activity turned out and it was a very popular activity. It allowed for some maths with measuring and breaking the sticks to be the correct length for each family member. Some of the younger children needed help here but we identified who the family members were, how many were in the family, who was the biggest and smallest and where they fitted into the family order. To extend the activity they added in their pets. Some children added their own ideas by adding the house the family lived in.



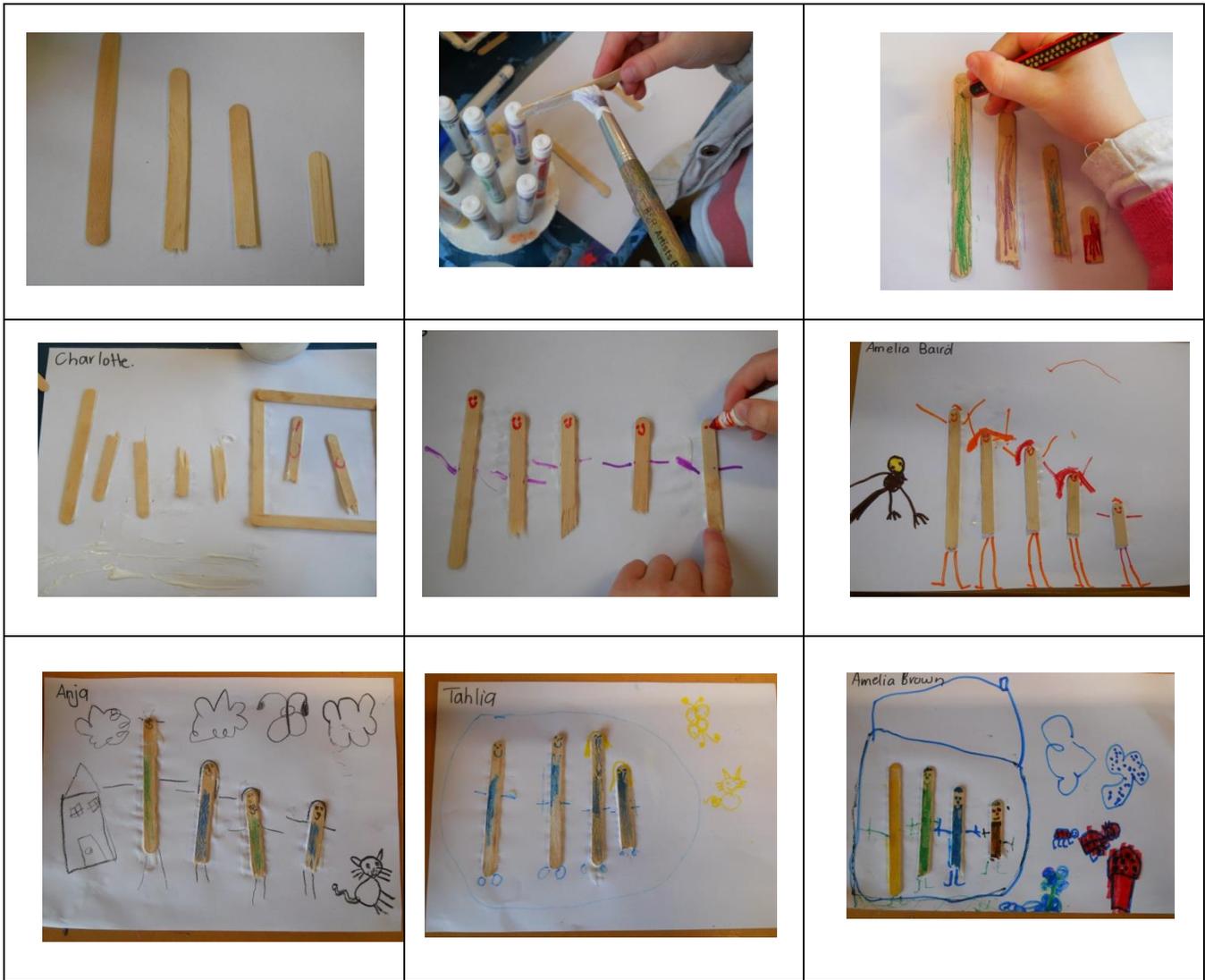
You will need:

- Wooden sucker sticks – about 5 per child obviously depending on family members
- Glue and glue brushes
- Paper
- Crayons or koki pens
- Optional: Pencils to draw faces and body parts



I encouraged the children to count how many family members they had and then to break the sticks into the correct heights. Some children managed this really well while others needed some help. They carefully put glue onto the back of the sticks and pasted them in sequence from the tallest to the shortest family members (mostly).

Avoid outting the glue onto the paper as this makes for a messy picture and putting glue on the stick is a good fine motor activity. Once the stick family members were in place the children coloured the sticks as clothes, drew faces and body parts and added extra details to their pictures



Some children preferred to use the sticks in their own free creative way as it happens in the open art area. These were mostly the younger children aged 3-4. Most of the family pics above were done by 4-5 year olds.

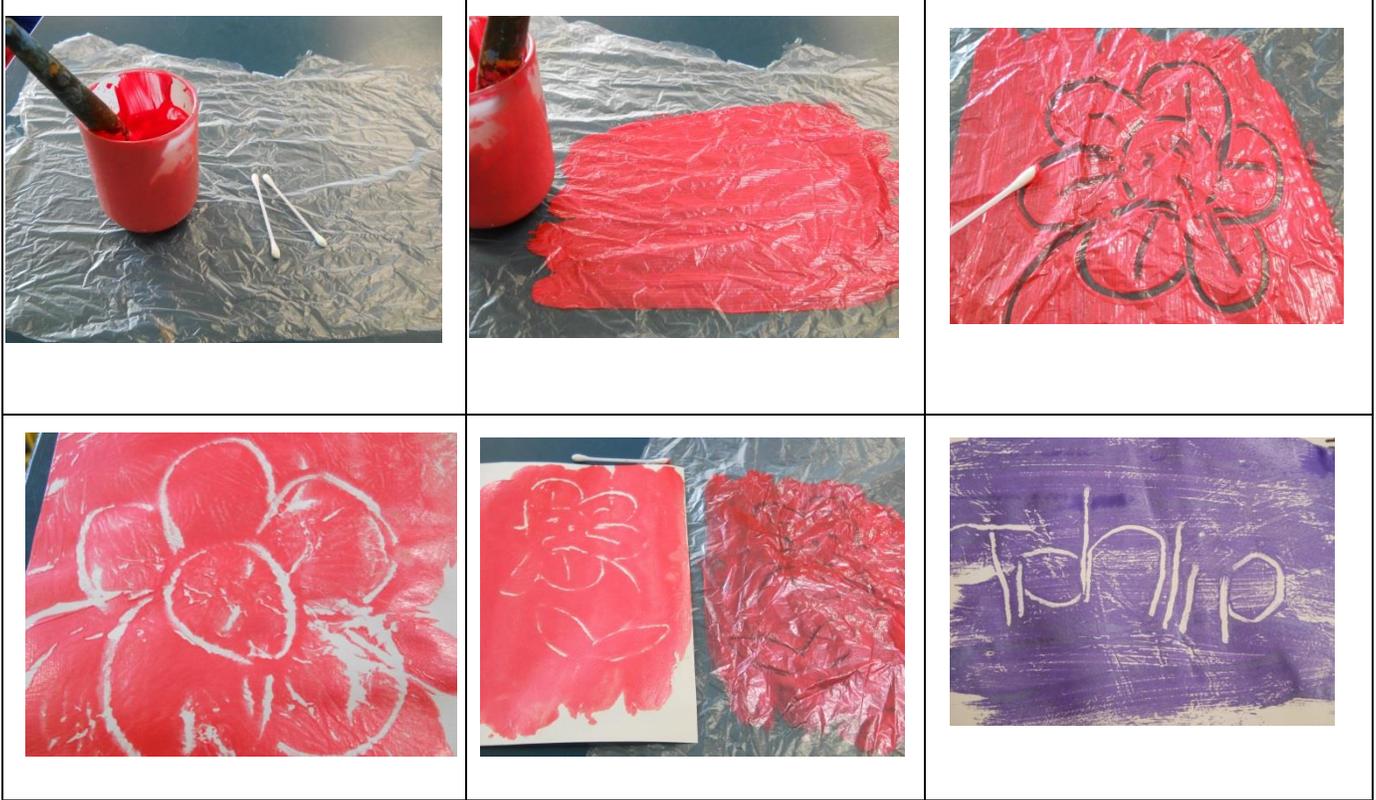


Suggestion

If you don't have access to wooden sucker sticks cut toilet rolls into strips and use them. Alternatively strips of cereal box cardboard can be effective too. In that case you will need to add scissors to the activity but be aware some children may sit there and cut your strips into lots and lots of lovely little pieces. Trust me on this one – I am speaking from personal experience!

Painting on plastic packets and taking prints

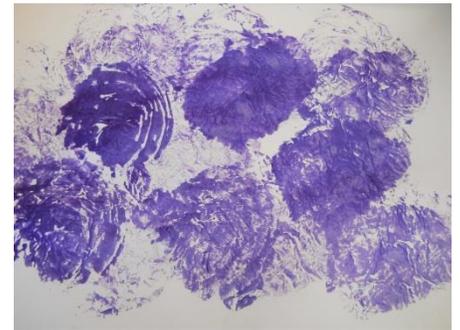
I cut some plastic shopping packets into smaller pieces for the children to spread paint on. Once an area was covered with thick paint, the children drew pictures or wrote their names using earbuds. They laid a piece of paper onto the painting and drawing, rubbed it gently and then lifted the paper to see the print. Some prints were more effective than others partly due to how hard or softly they rubbed the paper to take the print, how clear the drawing was to start with and how much paint they used for the base. It is important to use ready mixed paint as powder paint is not oily enough and will not adhere to the plastic. TIP: I think it needs something thicker to draw with.



Painting/printing with crumpled plastic bags

I extended the use of plastic bags to create printing balls of plastic bags. I crumpled the plastic bags into a ball and tied the handles of the bag to secure the ball. It's a bit of a jiggle but it worked in the end. The children painted the base of the ball and created prints on the paper. Some children preferred to use the balls to paint with.

This is a good activity for the younger age group and the prints make a lovely background for a collage e.g. blue for sea or sky. Twisting the balls create interesting patterns.





Painting in traced shape outlines

I end up with some many empty yogurt containers so when I saw this idea on pinterest I was sold. This example was done by Tahlia who is almost 5 and off to big school very soon. She did a great job.

You will need:

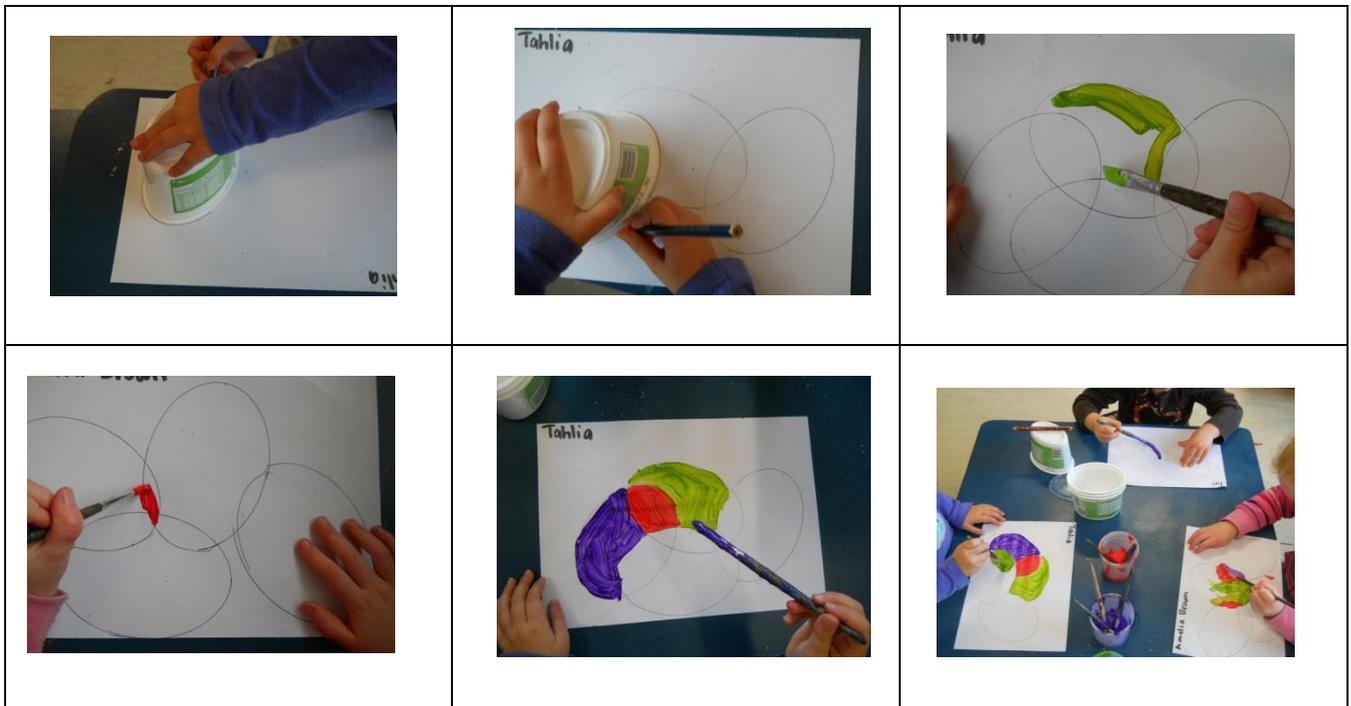
- Large yogurt containers
- Pencils
- Paper
- Paint – 3-4 colours



The children held the yogurt containers securely while tracing around the base. They repositioned the container to overlap the previous traced shape and traced a new shape. They repeated this until they had about 4 -6 shapes. They then painted the shapes keeping within the new shapes they have drawn and creating outlines.

Some children did really well with this activity but it is more suited to the older children. Younger children prefer to paint the container which is a good activity too.

This activity is very good for fine motor control to use a thinner paint brush and to firstly trace the outline of the shape and then to paint carefully within the lines. Some children found this rather challenging as you will see from the end results. Of course some needed glitter added.....



Variations on the process



Paper plate flowers with cork printed petals - Spring

This was an activity that did not work out as was planned so I had to think quickly on my feet to make some changes to make the end product successful. It happens to all of us at some time and I rather liked the end product even if it was not what I had planned

So the plan was to do a process art activity. I started off with the children spreading white glue onto a small paper plate, drop blobs of paint onto the glue and create patterns in the glue by spreading the paint with a toothpick. Firstly the toothpick was too thin so we already had to change to using a piece of straw. But the end product looked rather non-descript so I decided to turn the paper plates into spring flowers. In hindsight I should have used yellow paper so we made daffodils as its daffodil day at the end of August (cancer fundraising day).

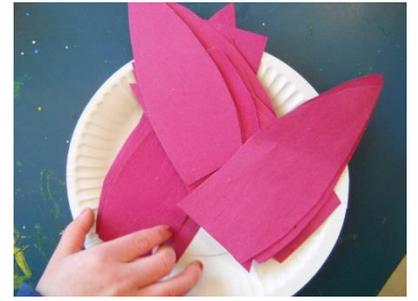
You will need:

- Small paper plate or circle of cardboard
- White glue
- Two colours of thin paint
- Straws
- Paper cut into petals, stems and leaves- it was quite firm
- Corks for printing

Optional - Glitter



This was the initial activity



Creativity

It is important to allow for some choices and individuality when children do creative activities. The aim is not to end up with perfect all the same end products. If the child pastes the petals in a strange way leave it. It's a good opportunity to do some assessment and just to let the children use their own ideas.

As you can see from the variations of the flowers we do the 'same' activity but each child is allowed to be individual and create their own flowers. Ideally if the children are older they should cut their own petals.

As usual glitter was added with great flare! Glitter is always available in the open art area.

Emergent writing – a very important reason to provide lots of free drawing opportunities

Her name is Zoe so you can see plenty of Z and O letters emerging.



Free drawing of her family - Sticky tape is always available in the open art area and these were taped together.



Collage - Paper cupcake liners to make flowers



Painting yogurt containers

We had lots of empty yogurt containers so the children enjoyed painting them. I added glue to the paint and offered them foam shapes to paste to the glue. Sometimes the simple activities are enjoyed the most.

Happy teaching

Regards
Karin

