

Preschool Theme Newsletter – September 2013

Hello Everyone,

I can feel spring is in the air and that always puts a spring into my step too. With the warmer weather it's time to think about water play and evaluating the outdoor play areas. The outdoor area is a complete learning environment in itself which should not only be limited to the large play equipment. Often this area is neglected as part of the daily programme. So take some time as a teaching team to evaluate this area, and find ways to extend and improve the area to provide variety and more learning opportunities. And don't forget to add in some gardening opportunities for the children to participate in. On the pinterest board there are some very easy inexpensive ideas that will keep many children happy for long periods of time.

<http://pinterest.com/kstedall/outdoor-sand-and-water-play/>



Now I know Christmas is still 4 months away....but if you plan to make some of the Christmas creative activities in the Christmas theme book then you may need to think about starting to collect some waste resources that are needed in particular shiny tea packets. There are over 100 Christmas activities on my pinterest boards.

<http://pinterest.com/kstedall/christmas-school/>

NELDS outcomes



I am currently developing a theme grid in table format of all the main activities for the themes with the matching NELDS outcomes. This is needed as part of the registration process with the Department of Social Development for the 0-4 year olds. My themes only start from age 3 so I am only using the NELDS outcomes for this age group. I will give you more information about this as I develop it. I do envisage having it completed by the end of November. If you would like the NELDS outcomes guidelines from the Department of Social Development they can be found on the Thutong web site or I can send you the attachment. I don't want to attach it to this newsletter as many people will not find it relevant.

New theme manual – Sea and the beach

Sorry it's still under construction!

Creative activities

Shaving cream and food colouring (My family, five senses)



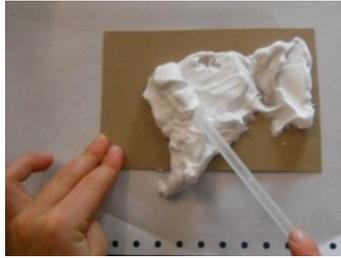
I love trying ideas from Pinterest. I saw this one with shaving cream and food colouring which looked like lots of fun.

I cut out some small pieces of cardboard. I had two different boxes I used for this. Some were cereal boxes and some were other food boxes. The 'better' cardboard to use is one that is less absorbent. So the cereal box was not a good choice as it absorbed the liquid and buckled a bit. It wasn't a crisis but it is better if it dries flat. Perhaps if you use it with the coated printed side up it would not bend.

I squirted some shaving cream (less is better – you can always add more) onto the cardboard and gave the children plastic sticks to spread the shaving cream. I thought they would want to touch it but they didn't. In fact they were really careful not to get any on their hands! You can also spread the shaving cream with a sucker stick or handle of a teaspoon. Once the cardboard was nicely covered in a thick layer of shaving cream they dropped small drops of diluted food colouring onto the shaving cream using a pipette. If you don't have pipettes a wooden sucker stick will work as will a thin paint brush but remind them not to paint the shaving cream. A pipette can be seen in the picture below. Eye droppers will also work. The children need

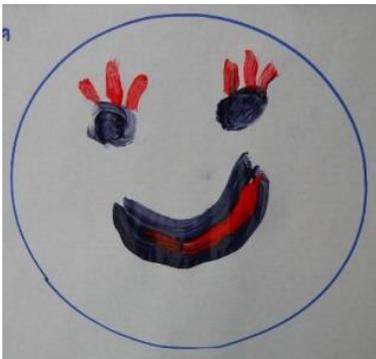


to exercise some self-control when using the pippete to make sure they only allow it to drip one drop at a time and I was impressed with how well they managed apart from about 3 children. Of these 3 children, two asked to make another one and managed much better. They were very excited about the end product. They do need to dry flat and may take a day or two to be dry. They do lose some of the fluffiness when they dry.



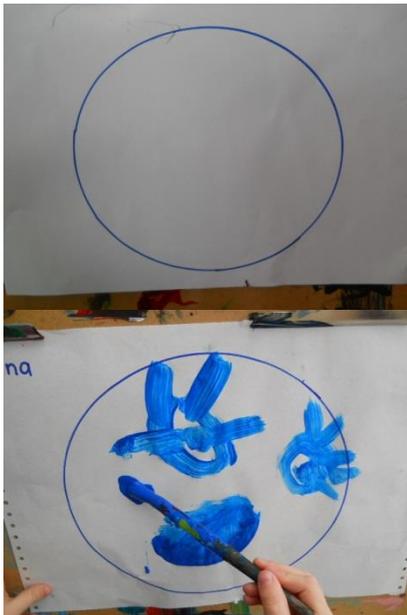
Extension: Next time I am at school I am going to try using the shaving cream and marbling the food colouring through it. Watch this space!

Starter paintings or drawings



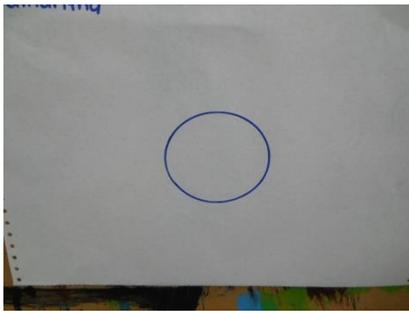
Sometimes it is useful to give the children a 'starting' point for them to draw or paint. I drew the children a big circle (dinner plate size) and encouraged them to paint using the circle. The older children (4 ½ to nearly 5 year olds) really enjoyed this and did some delightful face paintings. The younger children (3 ½ to 4 year olds) preferred to just paint in the circle or around the circle. In NZ this is how the creative activities works and I must say it certainly took me a good year to become comfortable with this idea. I am still not sure it's the way to go, but it does have lots of value too.

Once we had painted a few faces I asked if they would like a smaller circle and they used this to create a flower. Some children prefer to paint with only one colour only and this is not an issue to worry about.



Smaller circle starter picture

Here are some photos of the paintings the children did using the smaller starter circle painting. The picture on the left is a girl and on the right is a boy. Children will often always draw some things in the same way, so whenever asked to paint or draw a flower they will do it in the same way. These two are good friends and often spend time at each other's homes so that's probably the reason for them having the same 'schema' for a flower.



Pencil grip

Last month I discussed emergent writing. One aspect of emergent writing and writing readiness is the pencil grip. Children start drawing and painting using the fist grip and as their fine motor skills improve, they change to a pencil grip. There were two children painting about the same age and I could not resist taking a picture of such a perfect example of the two pencil grips. Interesting enough you can see the fist grip painting is still very much in the scribble phase while the pencil grip painting has moved to the head-foot man drawing stage.



Koki pens and absorbent paper

I saw this idea on Pinterest too. I used some paper towels that we use to dry our hands with at school but Carlton roll or coffee filters will work very well. It just needs to be absorbent. I folded the paper into a smaller square, lightly sprayed it with water and the children either drew dots or drew a picture on the damp paper. Once they had completed the drawing I sprayed it again (quite wet) and they held it by the corner to see how the water makes the koki pen ink run and make 'spiders'. They loved this activity and all wanted to do more than one. It's great for the younger children as no real drawing is needed – it's more a process.



A few other art ideas

Pool Noodle printing

Cut a pool noodle into pieces and print with them



See next page for this activity



Hand traced puppets

Trace the child's hand and offer them a variety of collage materials to complete their faces. As usual there are always one or two 'free spirits' who prefer to do their own thing! See previous page.

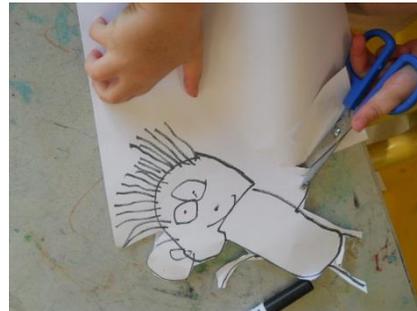


Jessie (4) creates her mom's birthday card



Jessie is just the most delightful child and she wanted to make a birthday card for her mom. She drew a picture of her mom and carefully cut it out and then painted it before pasting it to a card. She cut it out so carefully and she was so chuffed with herself when it was complete. I see she only drew one ear!

(Theme: **Myself, Me and my family**)



Support needed for a rural preschool

I have had a request from Alison Botha to please circulate this wish list for her rural farm school in Mpumalanga. All the links and her contact details are listed here. Please visit her web site to see the wonderful work she is doing with very limited resources and any help, resources and donations will be much appreciated.

Physical Address

Farm BA 18
Badfontein
Kwena Valley
Lydenburg District

Postal Address

P.O.Box 8026
Lydenburg
1120
Mpumalanga

www.lydenrust.com/wishlist.html

<mailto:info@lydenrust.com>

Some outdoor ideas - <http://pinterest.com/kstedall/outdoor-sand-and-water-play/>

Digging for treasures hidden in the sandpit and making sandpit volcanoes from bicarbonate of soda, red powder paint or food colouring and vinegar





Have fun and happy teaching

Regards Karin

