

August 2012 Newsletter



Welcome to the August edition of the preschool theme newsletter. The big excitement of July was the early arrival of our first granddaughter Eve and even more exciting she decided to make her grand appearance on my birthday! I could not have asked for a more special gift. She arrived 6 weeks early and only weighed 2.1 kg but she is fine and making great progress and so precious.

Slow progress

I have been making really slow progress with writing new themes but I hope to get back on track after the holidays and the baby. So please bear with me.

I have added some more CAPS outcomes to the web site.

Pinterest

Sorry to keep promoting this but it is so useful. I have been so inspired in my teaching from this wonderful web site.

I have also created boards for themes I plan to write so even if I have not written that theme, have a look for ideas anyway. Some useful boards are

- Grade R activities
- Maths activities
- Stories and rhymes – resources to make
- General creative activities – recipes and basics
- Classroom management
- Bulletin boards

To join Pinterest go to www.pinterest.com or Google it. You can ask to join and they send you an 'invitation' as an e mail and you are on your way to creating your own boards.

- You can repin from my boards to your boards and it doesn't remove it from mine.

If you have not visited the Pinterest boards please do. There are some fantastic ideas there.

<http://pinterest.com/kstedall/>

This is the direct link to my boards without having to join Pinterest

CAPS school report

Thank you to everyone who sent me CAPS school reports. I have looked at them and while most of them are perfectly good, each one had some problems for me for various reasons.

One of the difficulties with the new CAPS documents is that the assessment criteria for Life Skills is not there. As a result of this each school has created their own assessment criteria for this subject. This is perfectly good and essentially at the end of the day if you agree with the Life Skills criteria of a school report then use it.

School reports - Some thoughts!

I would just like to make some general points on report writing and report formats. The CAPS document requires you to complete 4 school reports a year and to use a rating scale of 1-7 with 7 being excellent and 1 being very poor. This in itself is confusing and frustrating, for me anyway, as far as I can remember 1 was good and 5 was poor!

1. **Terminology:** It is imperative that your parents understand the terminology in your school report. For this reason I find it difficult to create one format for all.
2. **Length:** The length of the report must be practical – to read, to complete and to print.

3. **Meaningful:** The comments and scoring system must give sufficient information.
4. **Compliant:** If it's a Grade 0 report it has to comply with the requirements of the Education department.

Considering all the above it becomes a challenge to create the ideal report. Far too many reports are merely checklists that need to be completed 4 times a year because you have to.

Grade R requires you to use the assessment terminology set out in the CAPS documents and I can guarantee you that a huge amount of parents receiving these reports have no idea of what has been assessed and what it really means. So more dilemma!

My **ideal school report** is a hand written one where the teachers writes in good plain English a narrative report of what the child can do etc.

This has limitations as its very time consuming and again if your parents are not English home language or your teacher is not the same language as the parents then it becomes a challenge for both. These reports also need to be done in draft first and edited by a senior person so again very time consuming.

Next best is a check list where you list assessment criteria and give it a score. Then at the end of each section or subject you write a sentence or two highlighting some positive aspect of the report or child that is not well articulated in the scoring system. An example of this could be (book area or languages) "Karin is passionate about books and she often pretends to 'read' books to the other children.

My least favourite report is just a general list of abilities and a score next to each one. These are my personal opinions.

At times you will have no control over the format of the school report and have to use the one prescribed by the school. But ***if you are able to create your own report I would recommend you take your time and give it a lot of thought.*** Be open minded and prepared to make changes when it doesn't seem to work well. Don't leave it to the last minute.

In the next newsletter I will talk about some ways of doing continuous assessment as you need to have all the information in order to be able to complete a report with honesty (and I have to admit there have been times when I have had to guess some things when completing a school report)

I have sent a separate email of some examples of school reports I have received. Thank you to those who were happy to share. Please do not use as is: use the ideas to create your own!

A Grade R school report can be purchased from the SAOU (need to join as a member first). Here are the contact details.

Babette Le Roux(SAOU) 012-4360925
babetteir@saou.co.za

Fine motor skills: 18 months – 3 years

It is often challenging to find activities that are suitable for the babies and younger children.



Once again I saw this idea on Pinterest. The children post pom poms into small holes.



I cut some holes in the lids of large yogurt containers and empty baby food tins. Three holes worked well. Having used this activity for both age groups the holes

for the younger children should be a bit bigger so the pompom pops in easily. For the older children it was good extra fine motor practice to have them push the pompom in with their finger.



I set out coloured pompoms and the children spent a long time happily posting pompoms into the tins.

TIPS: Supervise closely otherwise you will have tins and pompoms all over the classrooms. The babies like to put the pompoms in their mouths so discourage this.



Give each child a small container to hold their pompoms to post. They don't like to share!

Older children: To make this activity more challenging for the older children let them use tongs to pick up the pom poms and place them in the hole

Winter clothes



In the winter theme book there is an activity to paste pieces of winter fabric onto a person outline. I set this activity out at school and the children enjoyed it. **TIP:** Make sure you use good strong glue and encourage the children to be liberal with the glue. (Contrary to what we usually tell them!)



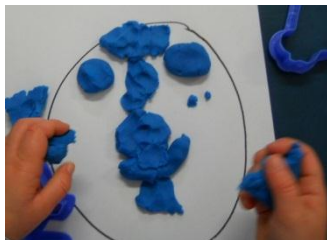
Fun with playdough

So often play dough is set out without much thought but with a few additions it can be an inexpensive and ever changing easy activity to set out and keep several children happy.

On the Pinterest board you can see several ideas to incorporate play dough into your theme teaching.

<http://pinterest.com/kstedall/playdough/>

I gave each child a piece of paper with a circle drawn on it. They created faces on the paper using the play dough. Some children preferred to make their own creations. These were created by the 21/2 to 3 1/2 year olds.



Bubble print winter snow

To create the bubble printing you need to use a small square of bubble print. Place a jar lid in the centre of the bubble wrap square and tie the edges together with an elastic band or piece of string incorporating the lid into the bubble wrap. The children dip the bubble wrap printing gadget into white paint and print on dark paper.



TIP: The younger children struggled to print and some ended up with a messy white smeared painting. If this does happen cut the painting into snowflakes or snowmen(or circles to make snowmen)

Rhymes

I have decided to include a new rhyme or two in each newsletter.

Action Song: "Here We Go Jumping"

Here we go jumping high,
Here we go jumping low.
Here we go jumping around,
That's how a kangaroo goes.
Here we go jumping fast,
Here we go jumping slow.
Here we go jumping everywhere,
That's how a kangaroo goes.

Credit: [Baraboo Public Library](#)

I would change the kangaroo to another more relevant animal such as a frog or rabbit.

Action Rhyme: "The Rain Is Falling Down"

The rain is falling down (flutter fingers down)
SPLASH! (Clap once loudly)
Pitter patter pitter patter (tap legs softly)
The rain is falling down (flutter fingers down)
SPLASH! (Clap once loudly)
Pitter patter pitter patter (tap legs softly)
[Repeat until kids are worn out.]

Credit: [King County Library System](#)

Happy teaching
Regards
Karin