



ARTISTS IN NEIGHBOURHOODS

The Arts For All (AFA) Artists in Neighbourhoods (AiN) program is a unique initiative inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, designed for early childhood settings. This program embeds artists into early learning communities to foster collaboration and creative expression with young children, educators, and the community. The AiN program emphasizes community, collaboration, process, and sustainability.

Pedagogical Documentation Mid-term Fall 2024



Credits

ARTS FOR ALL

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Rick Barker

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Janet Benneyworth
Wren Breeze
Kento Cady
Emma Enright
Katie Favell
Ayodele Hudlin
Janice Kovar
Rachel More
Zorica Silverthorne

NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERS AND SITES

BGC - Queen Mary
BGC - Prince of Wales
City of Hamilton - Red Hill Family
Centre
HWCCCC - St. Patrick
St. Matthew's House - 414 Barton/
Adelaide Hoodless
Today's Family - Franklin Road
Umbrella - Cathy Wever
Wesley Urban Ministries -
Dr. Davey
YMCA - Queen Victoria
YWCA - Ottawa Street



Introduction

The **Artists in Neighbourhoods** Pedagogical Documentation Fall 2024 reflection, is intended to share insight from the City of Hamilton collaboration and partnership pilot project, guided by the learning and invaluable insights of the Artist Educators working in collaboration with Early Childhood Educators.

Through the concerted endeavours of Arts For All, this collection represents a pilot initiative aiming to bring arts and creativity to the forefront of early education, transcending boundaries and embracing the unique characteristics of each setting.

As Arts For All is working diligently with multiple partners across varied environments , we're moving closer to the realization of a vision—to create an equitable system across Hamilton that ensures the transformative power and language of arts is woven seamlessly into the fabric of early education and middle years after school programming.

This document is an iteration of the journey into diverse landscapes, that explores the nuances, challenges, and triumphs encountered on the path to integrating arts into the heart of Early Education, in collaboration with a community.

St. Matthews

**Janice Kovar
Emma Enright**

A Reggio-Emilia inspired approach to Early Learning: An Introduction.....

At St. Matthew's Early Learning Centre, we embarked on a journey with the children that supported inquiry-based learning and that valued curiosity, creativity and community. We were implementing both a Reggio-Emilia approach along with the Arts For All programming to help toddlers and preschoolers to explore, learn and thrive within an arts framework with a specific focus on fabric and textiles, as well as the natural environment and outdoors that surrounded the children. The programming that we delivered as both artists and educators encouraged a child-led approach that valued process over product, allowing for reflective practices, collaborative planning, and a commitment to continuous learning over time. Over our ten week period there, we watched children increase their confidence in the exploration of materials, show a growing ability to work together, and engage in a heightened sense of curiosity, amongst many other things. In our documentation, we would like to share some of our experiences, successes, and challenges over the ten week period that we were there.

Classroom Setup

The format that we used in the early learning centre at St. Matthew's was based on the concept of consistency, prompts, and inventive materials and techniques. For every class, we repeated a similar pattern of engaging the children with a 5-10 minute prompt with a material that we were using for the day. This set the tone for the class and helped the children understand that we were going to experiment, play, learn, and discover together. After that, we introduced the materials/techniques and set up the activity. For each group, toddlers and preschool, we spent one hour each with them every Wednesday, and also spent time assisting the ECE's maintaining art supplies, organizing spaces, and creating an atelier space.



Activity Review

Project: Twig Wrapping and Mobiles **Group:** Toddlers/Preschool/Aftercare **Date:** Nov.13/2024

Children were encouraged to select twigs and wool to create a wrapped sculpture. Varied twigs and sticks along with cut wool lengths were given as prompts to engage the children.



What we Observed

The toddler group were able to take the wool and wrap in a circular motion. They chose various colours and wrapped the twig, covering it from the top to bottom. We noticed that they enjoyed playing with the wool, choosing their favourite colours, and then trying to tie the wool. They needed help in tightening up the wool to the twig, but in general they were able to complete the task themselves. They liked the texture of the twigs and we talked about where you might find twigs and what the material is made of.

The preschool group were able to combine twigs together and they became very excited when they realized that they could hook them together in a triangle and then hang things off of them.

Educators Role: Our role became a supportive one in that we tried to help when needed, but we really allowed them to create it themselves. We encouraged with positive support and words and let them complete the activity the way they wanted to.

Next Steps: We used this activity as a springboard for many other activities that were planned later as it tied so well into nature...for example, we also did leaf rubbings, building with twigs as a sculpture, and texture rubbings. We also carried this activity into the aftercare program at Adelaide Hoodless where we worked with Grade 1 students. They were very adept at wrapping the wool and were able to make complex shapes with the twigs. Other children already knew how to braid and also added that into their mobiles.

Activity Review

Project: Project: Banner/Flag Making **Group:** Toddlers/Preschool/Aftercare **Date:** Nov.20/2024

This activity was meant as an early introductory project where we could get to know the children through their choice of colours, design, and their use of materials. A collaborative element was added in that the children were invited to combine their work together in a long line of banners. Both classroom ECE teachers hung the banners up in the room which they were very excited to see!



What we Observed: Children love gluing things! We had most of the shapes precut, but the preschool group was really interested in using the scissors to cut some of their shapes. Some of the forms we cut for them based on what they wanted and then they placed them into position. They had a lot of fun with the glue on their fingers and making choices about where they wanted to put things. It was interesting to see how some children layered up their banners thickly with varied materials, creating an abstracted collage. Others were happy to arrange the shapes in a pattern. We created a long string on the floor and they each placed their banner to dry. Because they had worked collaboratively on this we noticed that they were commenting on each others work... things like “you have lots of colours” , and “ your’s looks like a bird” were overheard.

Educators Role: Setting up an area to create and spread out, encouraging kids to work together, allowing and observing natural conversations between children, and slowing the process down to reflect, were some of our goals.

Next Steps: In this project, we liked how the children chatted amongst themselves and were really engaged in the materials and gluing process. This was our third visit with them and they felt very comfortable with us. Many had greeted us with hugs in the morning and we felt a special connection that could be built upon for our next sessions. The staff and ECE’s seem very happy to see us when we came too! They have said more than once that they wish we were able to visit more than once a week, and even the program director said it would be amazing if we were there everyday. The ECE’s were happy to see new ideas being demonstrated and projects/techniques/ and materials being used in different ways that they had not thought of.

Activity Review

Project: Textile Printing with Foam **Group:** Toddlers/Preschool/Aftercare **Date:** Nov.27/2024

In this activity, we brought in pieces of fabric that had been cut into squares, along with florist foam that is used in flower arrangements. The goal was to have both groups engrave with a pencil or popsicle stick into the foam so that it left an imprint, which then could be painted and then printed onto the fabric.



What we observed: Children experimented with painting and carving in this project. The floral foam was simple to carve into and marks and lines can be made easily. Some children were very excited about the foam and were scrunching it up in their hands before we had a chance to get them all of the materials, but we had lots of extras, so it wasn't a problem.

Educator's Role: Observations included things like listening to their conversations about the paint, and encouraging questioning like... how did you get that effect? Or what do you think will happen if ...?

Next Steps: We used this activity to introduce paint and paint brushes and to create an open ended project that explored the process of printmaking. Many children enjoyed printing on their fabric in varied colours, overlapping shapes, colours and textures. We also turned this project into a larger collaborative effort in which they all put their prints together in one large square. The preschool groups were very active in filling in the spaces on the large piece of material, and also creating new shapes with the foam.

Activity Review

Project: Clay Construction with Twigs **Group:** Toddlers/Preschool **Date:** Dec. 10/2024

In this activity, we wanted to focus on the process of using clay as a building and construction material. We brought in a bag of potter's clay and gave out small chunks to the children. We showed them how to make small rolled balls and then had them press twigs and sticks into the ball shapes, allowing for them to construct large structures. We encouraged them to create a structure that was freestanding and perhaps balanced itself with the clay. This was one of our favourite projects and we could see how much they enjoyed using the clay, squishing it in their hands, and poking it with their sticks. Once little fella kept raising his hands say, "Whoa..... look how high it is"... as he raised his hands in the air in exclamation. This went on at least 5 times!



What we observed: We observed lots of intensity, focus, and determination. Although we did not have a set product in mind, they seemed intuitively to know what to do, and if they didn't, they were persistent in creating a structure, and enjoyed playing with the clay. Some of the ECE's commented on a few of the children who had not previously engaged in other activities, and how they seemed to be absorbed by this activity. The preschool group also has a high amount of boys so we were trying to devise a number of activities that were more active and physical for them, and this seemed to do the trick!

Educator's Role: We showed them how to roll the balls, often putting our hand over their own to model the motion. We spent more time helping them to keep things in balance as they expanded their shapes. We offered encouragement like..."can you tell me what's happening in your sculpture", or what do you think will happen if....?

Next Steps: Because they enjoyed modelling and building with the clay, we decided to definitely bring this activity back in the coming weeks, perhaps with self-drying clay so that they can take it home. Working with clay was very rewarding, particularly because we had a little chat about where clay comes from and how it aligns so well with the Reggio thinking of using natural materials.



Additional photos provided by the ECE's at St. Matthews who created collages as part of their documentation.



Red Hill Family Centre

Emma Enright

Group: 18 Months - 2.5 Years **Timeline:** November 28th, 2024 - February 13th, 2025 (10 weeks)

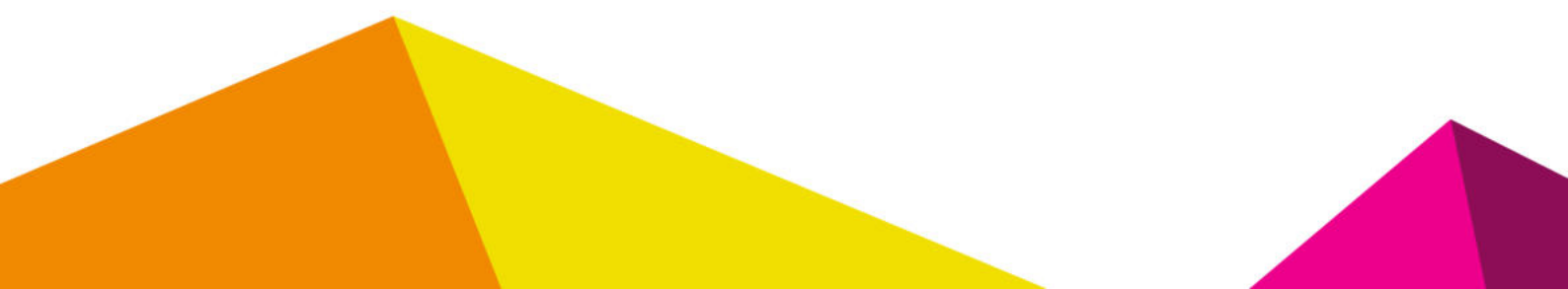


Introduction:

At the Red Hill Family Centre I worked in one individual classroom. I worked with Beth, Kylie, and Tamara, they were the early childhood educators in the class. They had a wide variety of knowledge and structure within their classroom. I worked with the children for about one hour, once a week for 10 weeks. There was between 10 to 15 children in the classroom, and that would also participate in the art programming. I also supported inquiry based learning that helped children focus on their activity, and also create excitement and curiosity. Most of the art activities were collaborative, and children could either work together to create something or individualized where the children could also focus on making their own work. When I was at Red Hill, I focused on process over product. I allowed the children to create their own ideas, and not to necessarily have a finished product at the end of each class. This allowed for more imagination and exploration while working. We also explored new materials and projects that they had not used before. A wide range of other ideas and projects that could be continuously in the future was part of my long term planning process.

At Red Hill, I implemented the Reggio Emilia approach as well. In the class we used lots of natural and found items from outside. We used clay, sticks, leaves and pinecones within selected projects. In my own research I found that children did gravitate towards these items because possibly they found them familiar. I found using natural materials within a classroom was successful, and also brought a relaxing energy to the space. It also led to curiosity of why we would be bringing these materials into the daycare. I also implemented the Artasia program within the Artist in the Neighbourhood project as well by implementing fabrics and textiles within the project. We used fabric and yarns within the program to allow for more experimenting, curiosity, and excitement. I found working with fabric, and also natural materials complemented the projects. We have talked about the materiality of each item, such as the textures, sounds and movements that one item can make. For example, a pinecone can be rough in their hands versus a piece of fabric that is soft and fluffy in their hands.

With the time that I have spent at the Red Hill Family Center, I have noticed an increase in their ability to hold items, their curiosity and their excitement with each activity. Every week they were eager and excited to know the project. They became more confident, and show their ability to share and work together. In this documentation I will be sharing highlighted insights, observations and next steps.



Classroom Setup:

At Red Hill, before starting the project, I would start with a prompt. A few examples would be if we worked with leaves that day, I would introduce them before and we would talk about where they were from, or if we were working with clay that day, we would talk about how clay is made. I would also pass pinecones around and ask the children how they felt, if they were rough or soft in their hands. These prompts allow the children to know that we were going to be working with them before starting the project. It also allowed us to discover together the materials, and I was able to observe how the children felt about them before diving into the project.

After, I set up a table and children were able to sit around and start to the activity. I introduced each activity beforehand and some activities did not have an example with them. This allowed the child to explore and have the creative freedom without having a final product that they were able to see and re-create. I introduced different techniques, such as collage, printmaking, painting, building, and experimental play.



Activity Review

Project: Colour Wheel Spinning Artwork.

Date: Week 5- January 9th, 2025.

Concept: This project was to learn about a colour wheel and how different colour can mix together to create different colours.

What I Observed: Children were encouraged to select different colours. I started this project with the primary colours, red yellow blue. I placed the paper into the salad spinner and added drops of colour onto the paper and spun the artwork around. We did this to create colour wheel. We also talked about colours and how they can mix together. In my observations, the children really enjoyed how the salad spinner created a loud noise well spinning the wheel. The class got excited and their curiosity showed when we were spinning the colour wheel. They all wondered what would happen to the paint inside. In another observation when we revealed the artwork, I told the class that we made the colour orange! The child that made the artwork was so enthusiastic about how there was another colour that appeared. We learned about how colour mixing happened by mixing red and yellow. We also work together to spin the salad spinner, they enjoyed the process and also learned to share the equipment.

Educators Role: My role was to support the children and allow them to create something themselves. They all chose their paint themselves and helped to pour it. I encouraged them as well with positive words, and and let them complete the activity themselves. They enjoyed spinning the wheel themselves, and I guided them through the process.

Next Steps: This activity was a great stepping point into learning how to mix colours and to create different ones. We also learned how to make purple, orange and green ultimately, we would be able to paint with a paintbrush, and also try other colour mixing techniques in the future.



Activity Review

Project: Pinecone Printmaking

Date: Week 2: December 5, 2024

Concept: In this project, we are learning how to create a print from the texture of different pinecones. We are revealing the textures on a collaborative canvas.

What I Observed: In this project, the goal is to gather several pinecones that are different sizes so there is a wide variety for children to choose from. We also talked about how the pinecones felt in the children's hands. We talked about if they were rough, sharp or soft and also where they came from. In my observations, I noticed that some children had a difficult time holding the pinecones. Some of them did not like how they felt. Some of the children had no problem playing with them. This might be because they were not used to using them in an art activity. We also took the pinecones and pressed them into the paint. We talked about the contrast between having something rough in their hands, and then something cold from the paint. Some children painted the pinecones with a paintbrush, and some children pressed the pinecones right into the paint. We did this activity collaboratively with a large drop cloth. Everybody worked on one together. Some children were painting with just a paintbrush onto the canvas, and some were also printing with the pinecones. In my observations, I think this was successful because everyone was able to add to the print.

Educators Role: For this project, I really emphasized the fact that there were different textures and materials we were using, such as the cotton canvas, the pinecones, and the paint. We talked about where they came from. Also, I encouraged them to have fun and experiment with the materials provided and demonstrated the overall shapes and designs that a pinecone can create.

Next Steps: I believe that this project could be continued by printing with other found items from nature. We could try printmaking with leaves, shells, and other items found in nature. This could also lead to using a twig instead of a paintbrush and painting with twigs. This could also be a stepping stone to try embossing, which is taking different textures or items found in nature and pressing them under paper. It creates a three dimensional effect. Using different found items is a great way to show a child that we can experiment and be open to different possibilities and outcomes. Since this was also a collaborative, printmaking activity, other steps could be demonstrating other painting and print activities on the same cloth, and at the end of the week workshop there could be a collaborative tapestry that would reveal all the different types of print activities that the class participated in.



Activity Review

Project: Leaf Drawing

Date: Week 3: December 12, 2024

Concept: The concept for this project is to learn about the different shapes and lines leaves can make, and to talk about their organic and natural designs that come from nature. We are learning how to create a leaf rub using paper and crayons.

What I Observed: When I brought out the leaves, we talked about the sounds that they could make. The crunchy cold sounds were intriguing to the children. Some children wanted to squish them in their hands as well. For this project we had to place the leaves underneath the paper to create a leaf rub. Some of the children understood that we wanted to reveal the leaf design. Some children want to just colour with the crayons provided. By pressing the crayon onto the paper we revealed the leaf designs. Children were enthusiastic when the leaf design was being revealed.

Educators Role: For this project, I also demonstrated how to hold a crayon and different ways to create mark making. I show the children that we could lay the crayon on its side and create a softer effect. I also demonstrated if we press hard with the crayon, the darker the colour would appear and if we press soft with the crayon, the lighter the colour would appear. I supported the children by positive affirmations and supporting their creative freedom.

Next Steps: Next steps with this project could be instead of leaves we could try pieces of fabric with texture to reveal the designs. Also bringing in other pieces of paper and putting them up to create a collage with the designs.



November 6 th -Memorial – After-School – Grades 3 to 6

I had asked the ECE who supervised the older after-school group, what kind of art materials the children have never worked with. "Clay!" Came the ephaptic response.

Finding air drying clay wasn't hard. I made sure that each piece of clay was roughly the same size, I also provided popsicle sticks and toothpicks for the children to use as sculpting tools. Cups of water were put on each table, and the prompt was to create a pinch pot. I demonstrated the technique off pinching clay to mold it into small pots that were rounded.

The first thing I was asked was "Can we make other things?" "Of course! Be creative but keep in mind how to attach clay to each other. Air dry clay is not Play-Dough, it won't just stick together." I then showed the score and slip method of making marks on both clay surfaces and adding a bit of water to act as a glue. About half of the children made little clay containers as I had demonstrated. However, they often chose different shapes rather than round. Two heart shaped pots stood out to me. I asked one boy about his choice. He was making one for his mother and wanted it heart shaped for her. The other half of the children decided to make 3D sculptures.

One girl made a slice of pizza out of the clay. I told her that it was very convincing looking. She then decided to cut a piece out of the side to make it look like someone had bitten it. As I continued to walk around the room observing other creations, I noticed from the corner of my eye that she was working on something different. When I got back to her, she had reworked her clay into a round shape. "It's a chocolate chip cookie!" she explained. She also had grabbed a small container of beads from the classroom and began attaching the beads as the chocolate chips and created small balls of clay as chocolate chips too. I told her I wasn't sure that the beads would stay after the clay dried. "It's ok, I will just glue them back." I made a mental note to bring my glue gun to the next session when the kids would be painting their finished dried creations. The ECE and I decided it would be better if I brought the sculptures home with me, as they had no place to store the pieces safely until they were dry. I planned ahead and collected fruit trays from a local grocer. I had the children and the ECEs write the artists names on the plate with the clay, and then carefully stacked the plates in the fruit trays. Each tray was then carefully stacked and transported to my home to dry.



December 6 th – Memorial- Pre-School

I had just wrapped up the dance party with the toddler group which is a connected room to the pre-schoolers. I had planned a craft activity for the pre-school children; however, I noticed that they were listening to the music coming from the toddler room and watching us with the glow sticks. Considering the benefits of movement, I decided to continue the dance in the pre-school room.

I had collected the glowsticks back from the toddlers and then handed them out to the eager pre-school kids. The children were asking for specific colours that they could see shining from the glowsticks. The ECE had a saying that stuck with me. "You get what you get, and we don't get upset." I heard her say it before, and noticed how it helped the children calm down. Everyone received a glow stick, while we moved the coloured lamp from the toddler room into the pre-school room.

I was informed that the children love the “Cha Cha Slide” song. I connected it to the classroom speaker and asked the children to dance along with me. The children followed the instructions in the song to dance along with the slide. “Slide to the right, slide to the left. Take it back now y’all. Cha cha real slow” The children understood the directions. They would move to their right, then move to their left. Or hop on one foot when directed. The ECEs in the room would demonstrate what a Cha Cha dance looked like. Most of the children would bounce up and down without jumping.

We listened to the song several times and the children danced along. Eventually, cycling through the playlist the party came to an end. Once glow sticks have been activated, they will stay “on” until they run out. I decided to let the children keep the glow sticks for the day and perhaps at nap time, they could still see them glowing.



October 30th- Memorial – Toddlers

I recently attended a lecture by Roberta Pucci whose artistic practice is paper. At the workshop we were encouraged to play with the paper and watch it change shape. To rip it, to see if it makes sounds. To interact with paper in a meaningful way. Inspired by this, I thought I would see what the toddlers thought of paper. I chose coloured tissue paper, that I find easier to manipulate than regular paper.

Setting the paper flat on the table in front of the toddlers. I wanted to work on non-verbal communication, so I picked up a sheet of paper, and ripped it in half. I made a face as if surprised and happy. I then motioned for the children to pick up the paper. Immediately, the children all grabbed a sheet of paper and then began to manipulate it. Some were able to rip the paper in half as I did. Others were able to wave it around.

I asked out loud if paper made a sound and waved the paper next to my ear. Most of the children then copied my motions. I then wadded up the paper into a small ball in my hands and then showed the children what I made. One boy was so happy to make balls that from then on, any paper within his reach became a ball that was then presented to me with the word “ball.”

The ECE then began to interact with the paper as well. She ripped up a sheet of paper into ribbons. She then wrapped it around her wrist. I copied her, however I put the ribbons on my head. Three of the children copied me by putting paper on their heads. One girl went to the ECE and held out a ribbon and her hand. She was requesting help to wrap it around her wrist. One child who created ribbons, got up from his chair and went to the carpet and began hopping up and down. He was waving the ribbon around trying to move it in the air.

Eventually as the activity came to an end, the ECE asked the children to help clean up. All of the children picked up pieces that had fallen onto the floor. We were putting the scraps of tissue paper into their sensory bin to continue to use later in the day.

The smallest child, a little girl was so intent on helping get every scrap, she even grabbed a small broom that was kept in the classroom near the table and began sweeping as best she could. After all the scraps were collected, she returned the broom and went to play with dolls.

I was impressed by how tissue paper was such a versatile material that could be manipulated in new ways. I reflected on the fact that most of these children are still learning motor skills and are probably told to “be careful” many times. Today however, they were encouraged to be rough and playful with the material. Perhaps that is why the smiles were so broad when I ripped the paper to start the activity.

November 13th - Memorial – After-School – Grades K to 3

I found some wonderful watercolour palettes and decided to introduce watercolour paper to the after-school kids. I set up the room so that each table had a tablecloth with at least one palette within arms reach, a handful of brushes of different sizes and shapes, small cups of water for each child, as well as one full sheet of thick watercolour paper. I told the children they could paint whatever they wanted, but before they started, I explained to make sure to wet the brush before using it on the colour they wanted on the palette. I told them to rub the brush around and count to 5 before using the brush on their paper. This would ensure that the brush was full of colour that they could then paint easily with it.

I was curious as to what they would decide to paint. During my time working with the Arts For All summer program Artasia, I had noticed that rainbows were a reoccurring theme of children's artwork. I wondered if that would be the case today, even though being winter, very few rainbows are visible. About half the children painted some form of rainbow. They were all shades and shapes, but the theme of rainbows was very obvious. The repeating pattern of colour stripes was one they agreed was "a happy colour" as one child put it. A few of the girls had learned about "warm colours" in school and took pride in creating rainbows and sunsets in oranges, reds and pinks.

One particular child was fascinated not by painting, but by "tie-dyeing" the paper towel I had given her to clean up a small spill. I watched as she dipped the paper towel into the water cup that had been tinted by the cleaning of dirty brushes.

She would ring it out and watch the colour change. Eventually, she started adding colour directly to the paper towel and then squeezing out the excess water looking at the new colour pattern. Her fascination was clear that she wasn't interested in painting as much as she was with the colour.

When her paper towel would absorb no more water, she picked up a dirty brush and then began painting on her hand directly.

Eventually the water splashes began to bother the other children at the table. They started taking it upon themselves to clean up spills so it wouldn't get their own paintings wet. Just before concluding the activity, I took the child fascinated by the water to the sink to watch them wash their hands. Again, the fascination by the colour changing was obvious. She would stare and move her hands deliberately under the running water so each finger was cleaned separately.

After washing and drying everyone's hands, the children made sure to place their paintings near the heater to dry quickly. As they were leaving, they would run to the heater to grab their artwork and show it proudly to their parent.

Umbrella Family

Katie Favell

November 21st – Cathy Wever- After School

I had previously done sticker making with a different group of children at Memorial School. I thought this would be a great introductory activity for me and the children. I prepared the sticker paper into individual pieces and brought with me a large box of my assorted markers and crayons.

Sitting at the only table in the room, I asked the children questions about themselves. "What sports do you like? Do you have pets? What's your favourite subject in school?"

My box of markers that I brought with me, contained lots of colours but also different types of markers. Some were paintbrush tipped, others were glitter pens, others were traditional Crayola markers. I observed that the girls who were really engaged in colouring, would take their time going through the box. They would test the marker or pen on a scrap piece of paper before using it on their sticker. The girls would show each other what marks the pens made. They discovered that some of the glitter pens were multi- coloured inside, so as they made marks, the ink would change colours. They would swap markers among each other to make sure each got the exact colour they wanted.

As we chatted, the children began to be more talkative and told me about themselves. As they completed stickers, they would walk over to me and proudly stick the sticker on my sweater. Once this happened the first time, the others started to follow suit. By the end of the activity I had more than 20 stickers stuck all over my lanyard and sweater.

My favourite sticker was one that a girl coloured a smiley face and stuck on my lanyard. She said, "it's a smile for you!" This was my first time with this group of children, and I am glad that they liked me enough to interact with the art, as well as myself.



December 19th – Cathy Wever -Toddlers

Today I introduced loose parts play to the toddlers. I had a bunch of cardboard construction tubes of different shapes and sizes and even colours! I wanted to see what structures or activities the toddlers would use these for.

We sat on the carpet, and I spread out the tubes and watched them make towers. They began by seeing which shapes fit together and noticed that the conical ones stacked perfectly together. Two of the toddlers placed a large yellow tube on the carpet and began filling it up with the conical ones. It was interesting to see that they were stacking the cones upside down, with the open end up. They used the open end to put the next one in. I had been stacking the tubes with the open end down. So, this idea was something that they came up with. The tower of tubes didn't get very high before it fell over.

The children then began to put the tubes to their mouths. I did the same but made a noise, so it became amplified by the cone shape. A large yellow and blue striped tube became a hand touch tube. One little girl put her arm in one side of the tube and reached out to touch me. I also put my hand in the other open end to touch her. She giggled and pulled her hand out. I tried to engage the other children in this hand touch tube, but they were more interested in stacking them.

Today's Family

Janet Benneyworth

AIN

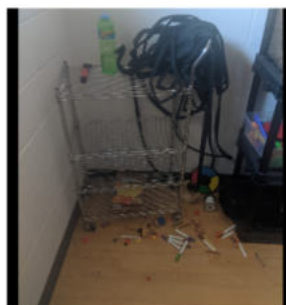
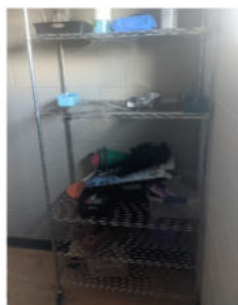
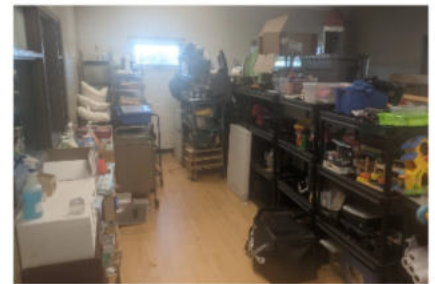
FRANKLIN ROAD

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2024

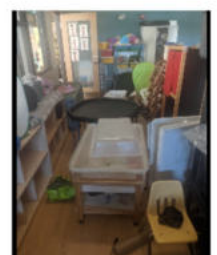
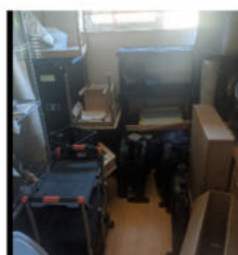
WHAT?

On my initial visit I observed the storage room, and I realized that it could function much better with some small changes; there is no lack of space, just a lack of organization. The supervisor, Laura, and I discussed some (end) goals, and my intention/objective became clear: when materials are easily accessible and available educators feel more able and apt (re: inspired) to integrate arts, and creativity in general, to their daily programming (rather than seeing it as a chore to be done irregularly).

side A



side B



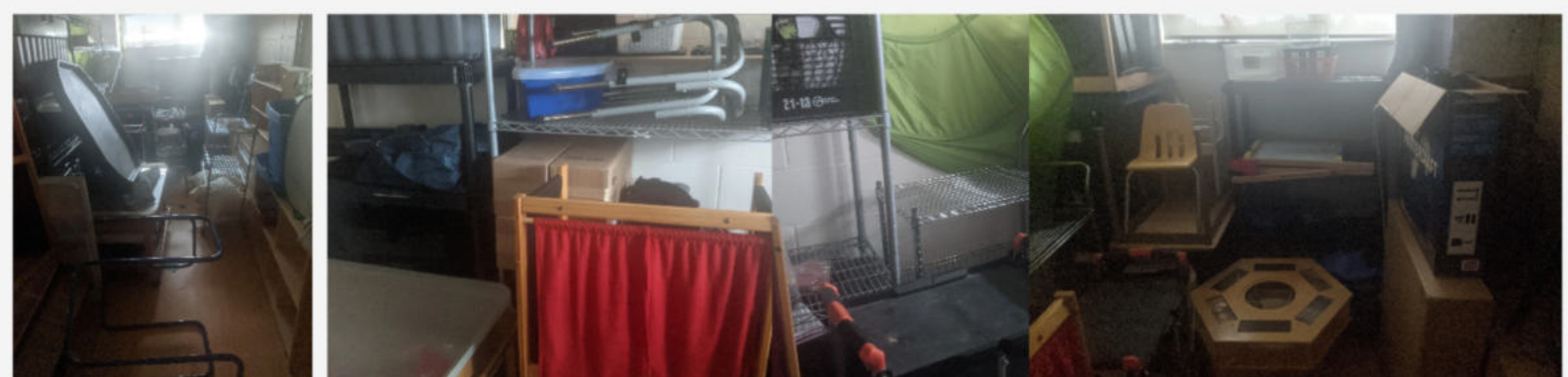
SO WHAT?

Over the following weeks, even with the limited time available (since I spent a great deal of time and effort in the classrooms with the children) I began to (re) organize with these (aforementioned) goals in mind. I realized that it was best for everyone if I could enhance what was already working for them, not invent a new system.

side A



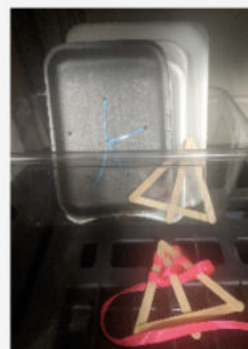
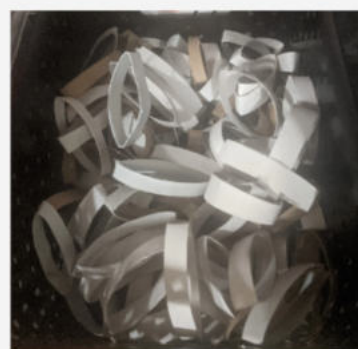
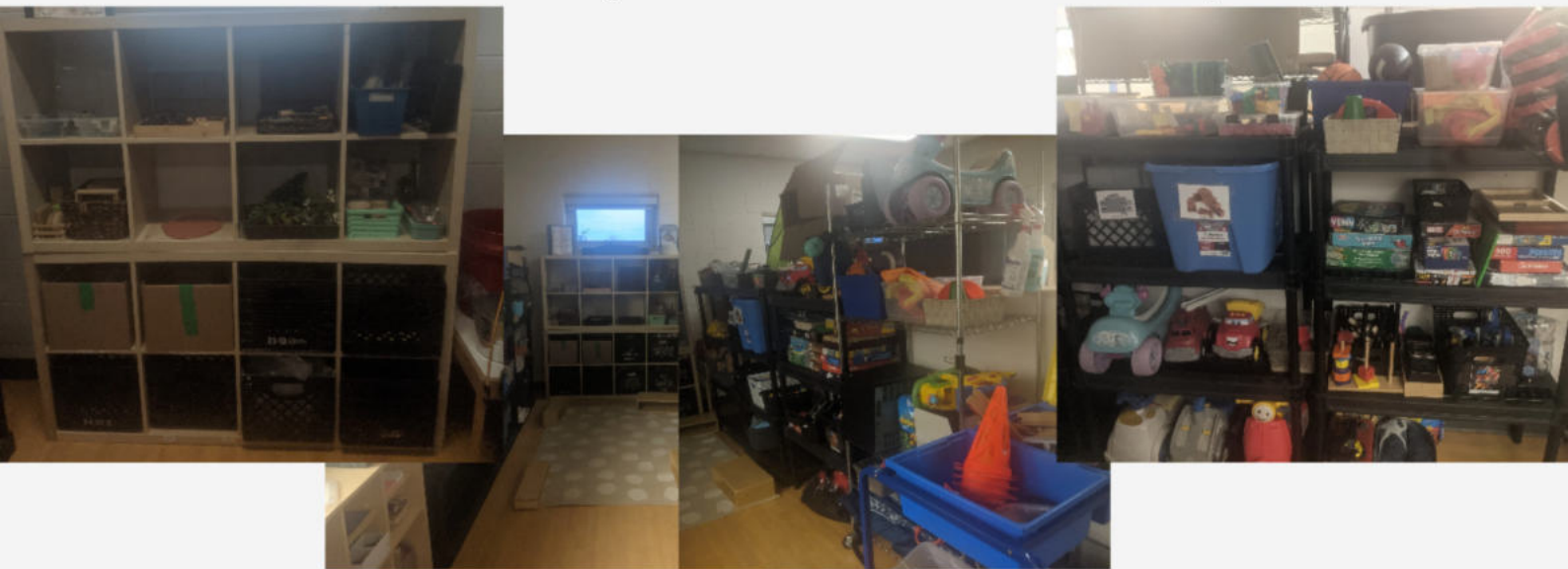
side B



I made some decent progress (in terms of making floor space and what to keep vs. throw away) towards making this a 'calm room' for the educators, but due to some challenges (namely 1. a lack of time, 2. items waiting on approval to be removed, 3. bulky pieces that could not be disassembled and/or made smaller), ultimately decided that this was beyond my scope this term; Laura and I agreed that my available resources would be better spent focused on the other side.

NOW WHAT?

Under the direction of an educator, Katy, shelves were moved to their optimal positions. This allowed me to fill them with materials and provocations for the educators to use in the future; this is Arts For **All**, after all. Considering that many of the items I left for them during my time here were already being used frequently, I'm curious: what will the storage room will look like when I return to it in a couple of months?



YMCA

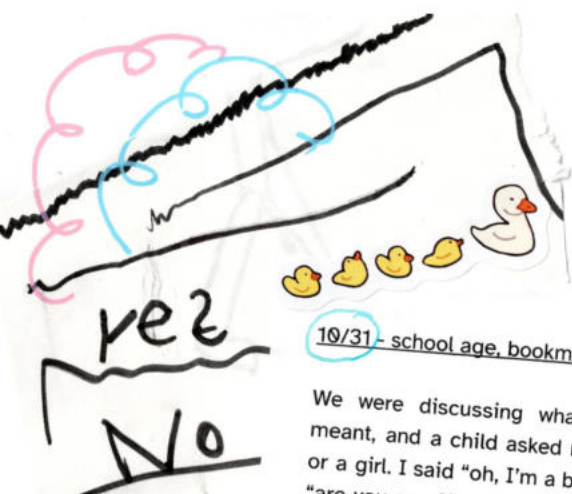
of Hamilton | Burlington | Brantford

**Kento Cady
Wren Breeze**

10/24 - preschool collage

We brought many materials to create collages with the preschoolers this week. While they were playing with the felt we brought, they decided that the fabric was better suited to being hats than it was for placing on upcycled garden sign. The arts shifted from visual arts to dramatic arts, but it's all art, so we deem it a success.





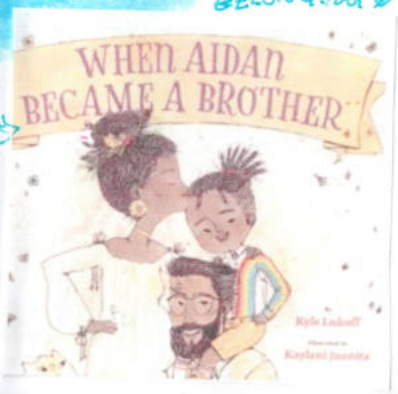
10/31 - school age, bookmaking

We were discussing what our names all meant, and a child asked me if I was a boy or a girl. I said "oh, I'm a boy!" and she said "are you sure?" I nodded, and told her I was transgender- "so born a girl, but I live as a boy because it's what my heart tells me." She was very quiet for a moment- then spotted a book across from her. "When Aidan Became a Brother" by Kyle Lukoff and Kaylani Juanita.

She carefully read me this book about a transmasculine kid hoping he'll be a good brother to his new baby sibling. I was blown away. She was still learning to read- sounding out all the words, taking her time with the terms, and checking my reaction to see how I felt. Along the way of the book, I pointed out resonant experiences. After she finished, she asked if Aidan was similar to me. I said "yes- this book really made me feel seen and heard. Thank you for reading it to me!" She nodded and said "I'm glad I was able to help."



This book is for Afterschool



11/07 - Music

We brought 2 drums and 2 sets of bells. And it was kind of a disaster. Too little structure, not enough instruments, no backup plans- now we know. The kinders decided to literally crawl all over us and it was very stifling.

the importance of bringing the right supply!

Sounds:

• SCREECHY



NOTES TO SELF:
MAKE A PLAN
C!! AND D!!!
AND, E, F, G, H



it was hard... it was learning experience....



Whew...

11/14 - Toddlers + Pre-K

Toddlers (18-30 months)

This week was really amazing to hear the voice of one of the toddlers! she hadn't made any noises or said any words until today when she was finally super comfortable with us! She also cried when we left because she didn't want us to leave yet, which was very sweet.

Dance DAY!!!



was elmo but it's very hot.



Pre-school (30 months - 4 years old)

There was no pressure for anyone to conform to gender in our fashion play. Boys could wear pretty dresses, and girls could be cowboys and truckers. They were engaged in how the fabric moved and expressed themselves through it. I was surprised at their inconsistent Disney knowledge, but happy with how they filled in their own details while recounting movie plots.

11/21 - stickers

Toddlers really enjoyed working with the markers- they liked the sensation of closing and opening the tool, attaching the markers together, and all the different sounds a marker can make. The children were ecstatic to make music as well. A child took a lot of joy in conducting our percussion by yelling "stop!" "go!" "stop!" and it was very sweet. They helped us clean up without us having to ask for it as well- very helpful.



Sharing is Caring!



The school age was full of fun and learning how to make things for others! Many of the children created stickers with the sole intention being to give them to other kids, or to the educators, and Kento and I. They really enjoyed giving gifts to each other and that was very sweet to see.



peek a boo w/ the apple



11/28 - Kinders - Puppet Making

This group was very engaged with cutting out shapes from the paper. I was interested in how they made more conceptual puppets- one kid cut out a heart and said her puppet was a love puppet. She wanted to make several other abstract emotion puppets- I was hyped to help her.

Two kids helped us clean up without us asking and it was incredibly nice. Usually the kinders try very hard to keep us in their space and I was glad to see them being able to adjust to the schedule this time. We still gave several big hugs.

WHERE IS SCHOOL AGE FROM?

- ① ITALY
- ② SENEGAL
- ③ "COLUMBIA"
- ④ TAIWAN
- ⑤ FRANCE
- ⑥ BANGLADESH
- ⑦ INDIA
- ⑧ ARGENTINA
- ⑨ GERMANY
- ⑩ JAPAN
- ⑪ CANADA
- ⑫ PALESTINE

With the school age kids, we had so many kids creating flags for all over the world. They started with where they're from and then moved to creating ones from all over, they created flags for Italy to Argentina and they had so much fun guessing where they were from!!

SHE WANTED TO MAKE A REALLY LONG PUPPET, SO SHE STUCK MULTIPLE FACES TO ONE STICK.

please, no glue eating.





How
do we
make the pom-poms
roll faster?



gotta go fast!



12/12 - toddlers, pom pom collage

Toddlers were less engaged with the planned activity, but very engaged with physics play today! We had pom poms and I suggested rolling them down a little slide. They loved seeing what techniques launched the materials farthest.

big hats of felt



12/19 Kinders - snow mural

We did a big collaborative snow mural with oil pastels and other materials. Kinders were so engaged with the page being huge-enough room for everyone! They drew on both sides of the paper and two kids got in an argument over which one had the "right" side up. Of course, there wasn't only one correct one. I taught them about being open to all points of view by drawing a big 6- I asked the child across to tell me the number (9!) and the child next to me to tell me the number (6!). I told them both to switch sides and see it from another angle- they did and went ooooh! I see- **"things are always different from another angle, but that doesn't mean it's wrong."**



I WANTED TO TRY TO AVOID CHRISTMAS THEMED ACTIVITY TO AVOID OSTRACIZING KIDS WHO DON'T CELEBRATE IT. HOWEVER, EVERY KINDER WANTED ME TO DRAW SANTA + MRS CLAUS...



HWCCCC

Zorica Silverthorne

Location: St. Patrick's Early Learning Centre and St. Patrick's Catholic Elementary School

Groups: Preschool (A.M.) And Grades 1-3 Aftercare (P.M.)

Duration: 10 weeks

Start Date: Wednesday October 23rd, 2024

End Date: Wednesday January 29th, 2025

Artist Educators: Zorica Silverthorne and Coryn Urquart



Week 9: Sticky Looms (A.M./Preschool)

WEEK 6: Floral Decoupage on Tie Dye Squares (Indoors)

Wednesday December 4th

A.M. Early Learning/Preschool Group

This session was a continuation of last week's activity. I brought back the rinsed, dried and pressed tie dyed squares, along with additional yellow dyed squares for students who were absent the previous week. Was looking forward to seeing the outcome of this session as I plan on creating a banner for the group with the final squares.

Activity Description: Using Mod Podge, gluing dried/pressed flowers onto tie dyed squares of fabric. There were also fabric markers available for when the flowers ran out. Only a few children created drawn squares.

Observations: Most of the children were here for the last session, so they knew the activity was continuing this week. After a quick demo, the children were very eager to decorate their squares with dried flowers. Some created very simple compositions with only one or two flowers, whereas others wanted a design with many flowers.

The children loved the colourful flowers and were pleasantly surprised when I told them they were all real. They were delicate when handling the materials as the flowers were fragile and did their best to not damage them when applying the Mod Podge.

Things eventually became sticky for those using Mod Podge but none of the children 'painted' it on their hands.

The children who used the fabric markers were happy using markers and some became fascinated with popping the lids off. I assisted removing them if they were too tight. I also showed them how to close them using the table, as I insisted that the lid click so the marker doesn't dry out.

They also do not use the markers on anything other than the fabric, they understood that the marker would not come off their clothes.

Evaluation: What worked: I think overall this activity worked well. The children were engaged and enjoyed the challenge of using such fine materials.

What didn't work: What I think didn't work was that not all the children had the opportunity to use the flowers because we ran out but I did bring in fabric markers just in case this happened.

Recommendations: I'd love for everyone to have the opportunity for everyone to apply flowers, I would either limit the amount of flowers for each child or buy an extra bundle. It would also be interesting to employ this technique to a large-scale collaborative banner.

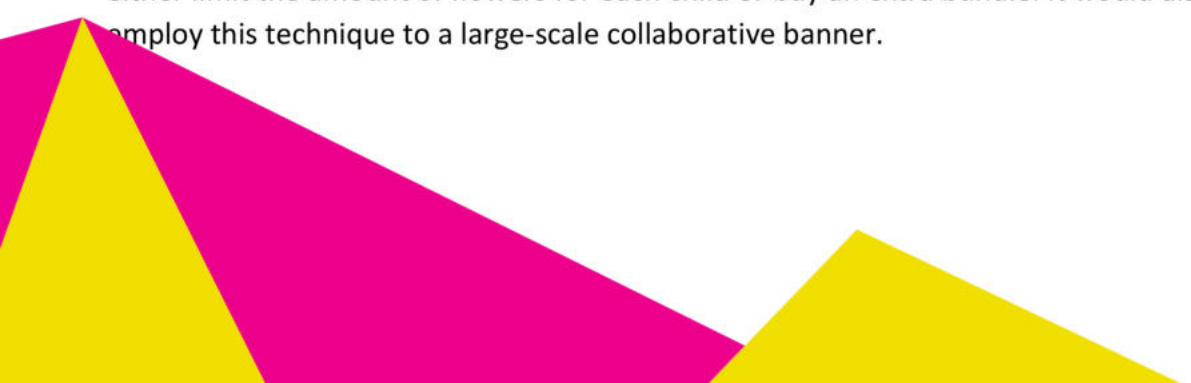


Photo Reference:

Photo 1: The table layout with materials

Photo 2: A child applying flowers to their tie dyed square

Photo 3: A child applying Mod Podge to an area before placing a flower

Photo 4: A triple flower composition

Photo 5: A finished fabric marker square

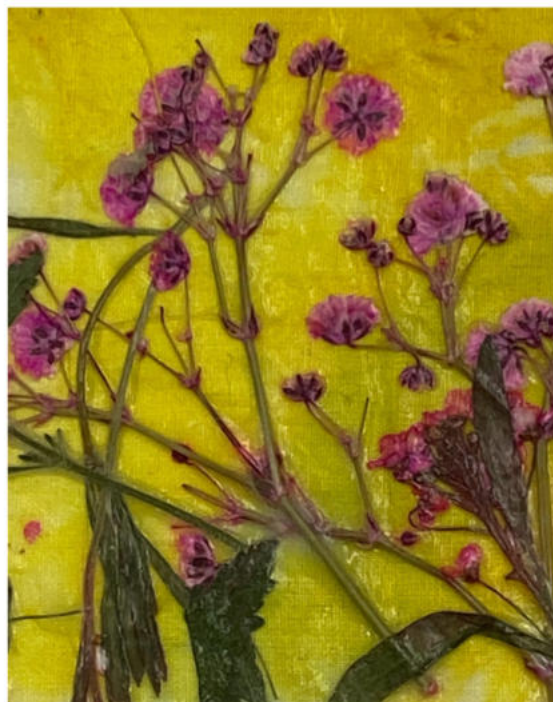
Photo 6: Process shot

Photo 7: Marker lid exploration

Photo 8: All the floral decoupage pieces

Photos 9-10: Close up of decoupage works





WEEK 7: Exploring Clay Wednesday December 11th A.M. Early Learning/Preschool Group

Coryn and I were excited to bring this activity to the group. Initially we wanted to do this outside but the weather was not favourable so we decided to hold it indoors. The ECE's had requested this activity and we did our best to bring the outdoors in and to keep it fun and engaging so the children could explore clay.

Activity Description: Exploring self drying clay with the option of using natural materials and interesting objects to enhance their sculpture. There were faux pearls but also real pinecones, branches, shells and pebbles, which the children could use while creating. They also had popsicle sticks and wooden clay tools (molding tools and gauging tools) available to assist them with manipulating the clay. White plastic plates were also provided as a base to make it easier to transport the final pieces.

Observations: Coryn and I set up the table with a Reggio Emilia approach and placed items in wooden bowls, hoping to make the provocation inviting.

The children's immediate reaction at seeing the clay was that of excitement. All the children who participated were very interested in the material and were eager to get their hands or tools into it.

The children were curious about the additional objects and wasted no time exploring the bowls containing pinecones, shells, pebbles, faux pearls and branches. The pearls and shells were coveted, and at one point I added a few more pearls to keep the peace.

The clay tools also held a fair amount of curiosity. Cutting, jabbing, gouging and even just embedding were all explored with vigor. We had to encourage a few children to trade embedded tools for popsicle sticks, which was met with reason and an understanding of sharing.

Given that clay is such a malleable material, it was no surprise that the children's sculptures were ever changing and evolving. This was met with joy and a sense of playful exploration.

There was a lot of "hiding" objects within the clay. Some were retrieved and rehidden multiple times, making the action 'game-like'. A few children loved the idea that only they knew an object was hidden, which elicited several mischievous smiles and leaving hidden items was then favored.

Along with hiding objects many were embedded into the clay but still left exposed, others used tools and objects to create textures for interest.

Out of curiosity, Coryn and I asked about their pieces and many of the children were eager to tell their tales. There was talk of pirates and treasures. Underwater landscapes and hidden jewels. Forests and rock families bejewelled with pebbles and pearls.

Evaluation:

What worked: I think this activity worked really well. There was just the right amount of materials for engagement and exploration.

What didn't work: I don't think anything didn't work. We knew that the pearls and shells would be popular but the children were okay with only having a certain amount.

Recommendations: I think it would be interesting to have this activity outside and encourage the children to use natural materials they find outdoors. Perhaps if this were to be held indoors again I would bring in sand and maybe break down some of the twigs. This might make the twigs less intimidating to use.

Photo Documentation:

Photo 1: Our Reggio Emilia inspired provocation

Photo 2: Embedding pearls

Photo 3: Revealing hidden treasures

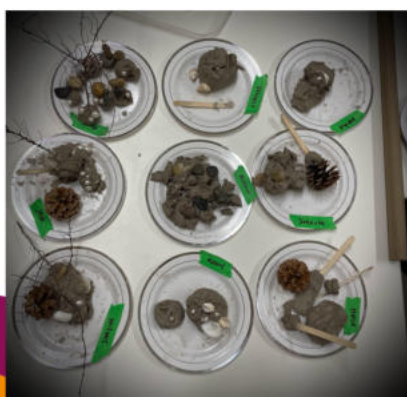
Photo 4: Hand rolling rocks

Photo 5: Playing with shells

Photo 6: Embedding pearls and shells

Photo 7: Final sculptures

Photo 8: The pearl & pebble family



WEEK 9::Weaving on sticky looms (Indoors)

Wednesday January 8th

A.M. Early Learning/Preschool Group

Weaving was something I wanted to bring to the class in continuation with our Artasia programming from 2024, which featured fabric. I decided to simplify a loom and use a sticky surface for mounting the yarn.

Activity Description: Working on a sticky loom, create fabric art using various yarns. Children had various types of yarn and colours, along with scissors to shorten the yarn and a round sticky loom made from construction paper and contact paper.

Observations: The weather was not favourable for an outdoors session so I set up inside at one of their tables. There was a small group already in the classroom and another was coming inside.

The children were eager to know what the art session was going to be and anxiously watched me set up, while others had to go through their “back from outside” routine before joining me. Some of those children tried joining but were kindly reminded to finish the routine and were assured they would be able to make art!

The set up was simple and after a quick demo the children started weaving their works.

Each child was given a sticky loom along with a wooden bowl which contained yarn (red, black with metallic gold, multi blue and a thick and thin rainbow). Scissors were also supplied.

Many were fascinated with the transparency of the contact paper and held their loom against their faces. We made the comparison to a piece of stained glass.

Some children quickly applied all their yarn to the loom and declared “done”. I suggested they make another, which they excitedly agreed to.

Others were very intentional with their yarn placement. I gave a few ideas on what you could possibly weave; the letter of your first name, a shape, a spiderweb.

One child really liked the idea of a spider web so he tried his hand at creating one with the red thread. He became a little frustrated that it wasn't sticking where he wanted it and asked me for help. I also gave him more red yarn to complete his web. He was super excited once he finished his weave. The other children wanted to see his work as well.

Several students became hyper focused on using the scissors. They prepared small pieces of yarn and once satisfied with the amount began sticking them to the loom.

Others required assistance using the scissors and celebrated when they were finally able to cut through the yarn. I was thanked by an ECE for trusting the children with the scissors as it was a tool they were practicing with in the classroom.

Evaluation

What worked: I think this activity was very successful. All the children seemed capable of doing the activity, even with a few requiring assistance with using the scissors.

What didn't work: I don't think anything didn't work. If anything I could have provided smaller pieces of yarn for those children who were not as confident at using the scissors.

Recommendations: I am following the flow of interest and plan to further explore the use of yarn by adapting this activity into a more sculptural piece. This will be for the last session this term (Week 10).

Photo Documentation:

Photo 1: A child discovering the sticky paper is transparent

Photo 2: Discovering how sticky, sticky paper really is!

Photo 3: Initial set up inspired by Reggio Emilia.

Photo 4: A child using the scissors

Photo 5: More scissor use. A stock pile of small bits!

Photo 6: Returning for yarn play

Photo 7: Weaving a web

Photo 8: Returning for yarn play, around a finger

Photo 9: A final piece.

Photo 10: Celebrating their creations!

Photo 11: The final web!

Photos 12-15: Final pieces





WEEK 3: Exploring Watercolours Pt.1

Wednesday November 6th

P.M. St.Patrick's Aftercare/ Grades 1-3

Watercolours are a favourite of this group. Something I touched upon last term but wanted to reintroduce for the new children. My arrival brought on excitement and there was a mad rush to our usual set up area, which is a U shaped desk in the far right hand corner of the classroom. I encouraged the children to have their snack first then come over to the art session but many wanted to jump right in. The concept of this session was to demonstrate different techniques one could use when painting with watercolours. I brought in a Watercolour Technique booklet that I made and use often with my other art students.

Activity Description: Learning the basics of watercolours. How does the dry pigment from the palette turn into wet watercolour, how does one mix lighter colours and understanding white IS the paper. I brought in a size variety of watercolour papers. Small pieces to experiment with, along with larger sizes for more confident works. There also were various sized brushes to choose from. They also had access to several watercolour sets along with metallics.

Observations: As usual the children were very energetic and anxious to start. Some worried there would not be enough supplies to go around. I assured them there was enough for everyone! I gave a quick demo of how to use the watercolours. Basics about how the pigment is dry within the tray and adding water is what extracts the colour. How the paper is our white paint and you would need to preserve it in order to have an area that was white. Also understanding that the more water you add to the brush the lighter the colour would be.

Going over the different watercolour techniques one would use to create a tie dye effect, or a solid wash (or colour), how to use straws to create firework shapes.

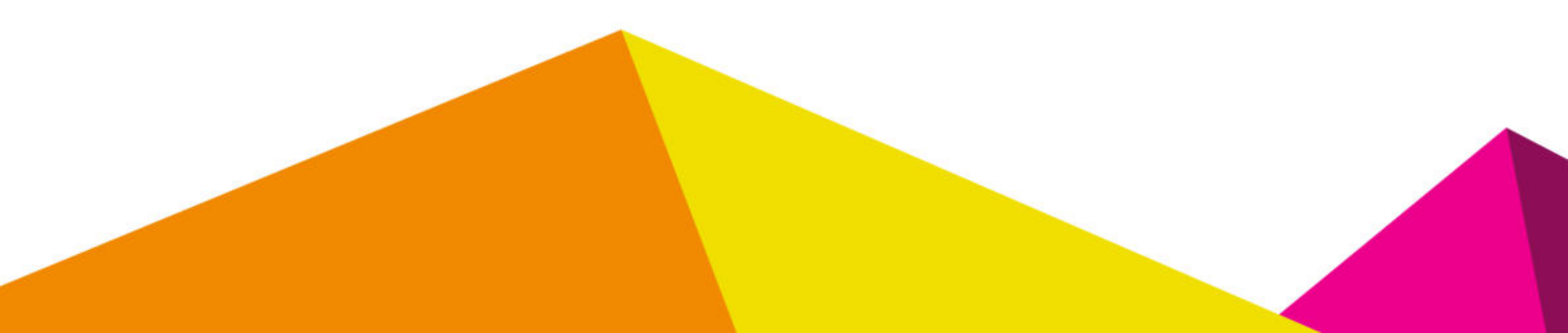
Needless to say, the straws were a big hit, though creating rainbows and using the metallics was also a very popular thing to do.

Many chose to paint multiple mini paintings, while others graduated onto larger sheets and created focused subjects such as colourful landscapes with trees.

There was one child in particular who had a strong interest in creating gradated rainbows by using each brush stroke as a separate colour. This child created several small paintings and large ones all featuring rainbows.

As always it's fun to see how excited they get at the drastic changes their water goes through during an art session. How quickly it can become muddy or black (a very yuck realization for some!).

The children were very engaged with the watercolours, so I decided it might be great to continue the activity for the next session. I wanted to add additional watercolour materials to enhance their experience.



Evaluation

What worked: Bringing various sized papers was a great idea. Many felt the need to “dip” their toes into the water by starting out with a small piece of paper then jumping fully in by using a larger one. Also I thought bringing in two different watercolour kits along with metallics made for a more dynamic experience. One of the kits had more than 12 colours including very bright hues. Definitely having straws was a massive bonus and added a dramatic flair to the art.

What didn't work: The U table is not large enough for the size of our group, which leads to much tension amongst the children as space is at a premium. The need for a third watercolour kit (the one with more than 12 colours).

Recommendations: Requesting a larger table, though I know that might not happen. Having children sit at desks is an option. Adding a third watercolour set would be great so that we could split the table into three sections fairly. I know I will continue with Watercolour Exploration in the next session and add other water soluble mediums into the mix.

Photo Documentation:

Photo 1: The watercolour set up before the session

Photo 2: A small landscape painting of a sunset

Photo 3: A child engaged in watercolour experimentation with colours

Photo 4: A creative creature design in process

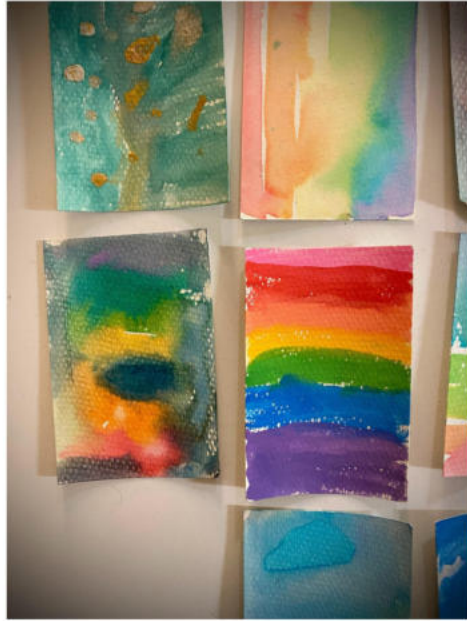
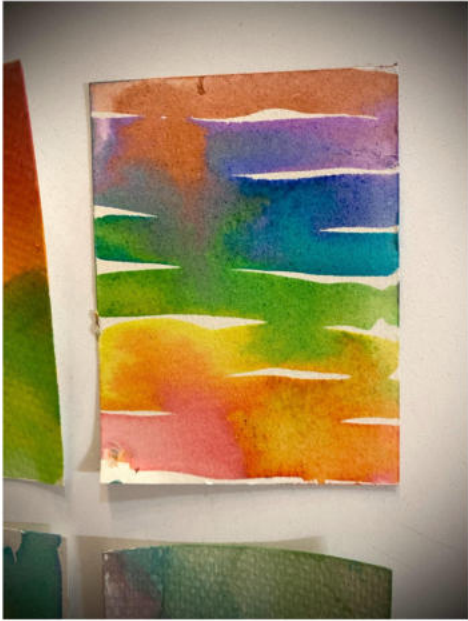
Photo 5: Final small pieces

Photo 6: Close up of the small rainbow watercolour

Photo 7: Examples of several small pieces

Photo 8: Examples of the larger pieces, some featuring the straw technique





WEEK 4: Exploring Watercolours Pt.2

Wednesday November 13th

P.M. St.Patrick's Aftercare/ Grades 1-3

Today's art making session is a continuation of last weeks, delving deeper into using watercolours. In the previous week the children voiced their love of watercolours and were eager to keep working with them for this session.

Activity Description: Further exploring watercolours using watercolour pencil crayons and water soluble oil pastels. The introduction of two new water soluble mediums to further enhance their experience. Opening up new possibilities for creating in this medium and allowing more diversity by combining the mediums.

Observations: My return for another art session was eagerly anticipated. The children had situated themselves in our regular spot and were curious about the new materials.

There was anxiety about not having enough materials and although having one large pack of water soluble oil pastels seemed like not enough, in fact they were able to share.

The demo was quick showing the versatility of the pastels, you could leave them as is or add water to the surface which then dissolved the solids and made it into a spreadable paint.

The watercolour pencil crayons were also a hit and the children who loved drawing really seemed excited by them. Same principle as the pastels, draw then wet.

Due to space, some of the children had to work at student desks, which wasn't a problem for them.

There were more patterns created this time around and trees as subject matter were still popular, as were the use of metallics!

Evaluation

What worked: Introducing the additional materials was a hit. The children really seemed excited to know there were other ways to paint and to have the ability to combine more linear art with a painterly effect.

What didn't work: The space was still tight for all the materials and personal space needed. A refinement of where shared materials are kept is needed.

Recommendations: Having a separate table for materials or even as an overflow workspace. More variety in paper size and types of paper, like YUPO (a paper that is more plastic and the pigment sits on top rather than soaking in). Employing more Watercolour Techniques like alcohol, plastic wrap, salt and frisket.



Photo Documentation:

Photo 1: A child exploring watercolours using water colour pencil crayons

Photo 2: A child holding up their mini painting using watercolour pencil crayons

Photo 3: A child removing green tape from their explorative painting

Photo 4: A child exploring watercolours using water colour pencil crayons

Photo 5: Final pieces left to dry

Photo 6: Final water soluble oil pastel paintings



Wesley Urban Ministries Child Care Centres

Ayodele Hudlin

Location: Dr. Davey ELCC/ASP

A Different Perspective

Building on our first week's activity of blowing bubbles with straws on a table, we extended the exploration by incorporating paint into our creative process during after-school care. Using straws and vibrant paints on mixed media paper, the children experimented with breath as a tool for artistic expression.

By gently blowing through the straws, they watched as the paint spread across the paper, creating organic patterns and fluid designs. The movement of the paint mimicked the way wind ripples across the surface of the water, adding a dynamic effect to their artwork. This simple yet engaging activity encouraged both creativity and curiosity, as the children observed how their breath could influence the direction and shape of the paint, making each piece unique.



It was inspiring to watch as each child applied their own techniques and skills, transforming a blank canvas into a vibrant display of creativity and individuality. Their unique approaches to manipulating the paint resulted in beautifully distinct patterns, showcasing their imagination and artistic expression.



As we neared the final touches on our paintings, we experimented with another technique of folding and pressing the pages together. As we gently smeared the paint, vibrant colors blended and spread in unexpected ways, revealing stunning, symmetrical patterns. The excitement grew as each unfolded page revealed a unique and beautiful creation, adding an element of surprise to the artistic process.



What do you see?



A stingray! A butterfly!



I see a peacock! I see a colourful duck!



It was fascinating to realize that this painting was originally created upside down, adding an unexpected and unique perspective to the artwork.

Location: Prince of Wales
Ages: Toddlers, Preschool, School-Age

I was challenged by Prince of Wales. Ultimately I came to realize that the challenge was my own barriers and I needed to step outside of myself and look at the centre with fresh, unbiased eyes. I received great advice from my fellow artist-educators during our lunchtime meetings. I was humbled and informed by the work that the ECEs and School Age Facilitators were doing and allowed myself to expand my idea of what “arts education” could be helped me to meet and rise above the initial challenges I perceived.

I split my time between toddlers and preschool on a week by week basis - one week with preschool, the next with toddlers, and so on. During naptime I would take lunch and prep for the school age program. The school agers were a very creative group, who really liked actual crafts. Mornings with the toddlers and preschoolers was more emergent, more focused on trying different things. Afternoons with the school agers was more focused on producing actual pieces.

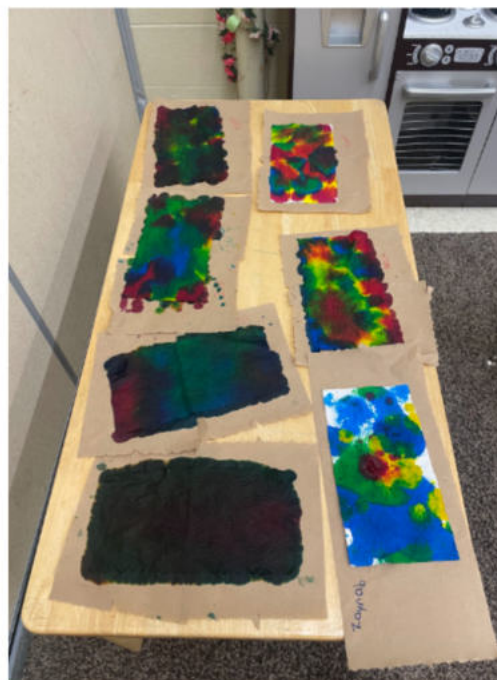
Musical instruments were extremely popular when I first brought them and we often pulled them out as the term went on. I cut some reusable shopping bags into strips and we tied them to the fence in the toddler playground and watched them blow in the breeze. On a particularly rainy day we brought paints out to the playground and painted all over the built environment.



As previously stated, the school agers responded to more defined activities. One of their favourites was also mine - paper plate portals; windows into the world of our imaginations.



But just because they were more engaged by more traditional crafts, didn't mean that we couldn't experiment. One of the most fun activities (and messiest, sorry Cass!) was when we tried DIY tie-dye with paper towels and food colouring. Once the paper towels had dried, we hung them up in the window and they looked just like stained glass!



My time at BGC Prince of Wales was a growth experience. I had to stop letting my expectations lead me down paths of frustration and just take the experience for what it was. By opening myself up to the moment, I was able, at last, to meet it.