

Arts For All: Artists in Neighbourhoods

**Tiny Hoppers
Rymal – Stoney
Creek Daycares**

Fall 2025 – Winter 2026

Sophie Hewitt

The Artists in Neighbourhoods program by Arts For All aims to improve access to art education, taught by local artists, to children of various ages across Hamilton.

This Fall/Winter term, I had the pleasure of working with Tiny Hoppers on Rymal Road.

Although I had never worked with children so young before, I faced the challenge and gave it my all. The children gave it their all as well, and we had a fantastic 8 weeks learning together.

Exploring Together

Throughout the 8-week program, I predominantly worked with the preschool and toddler classrooms. I felt I lacked the training necessary to do impactful work with the infants, which is something I'm going to do in the upcoming spring term.

With the preschoolers and toddlers, it was fascinating getting to see the developmental differences between the two age groups, and help the children reach new milestones in fine- and gross- motor skills.

I feel I learned from the children just as much as they learned from me.

Colour & Texture

The preschool children explored colour mixing and undertones through using a variety of tempera paint sticks on coloured construction paper. Some of the children made some very interesting and intentional mark making with the paint sticks, creating lines of dots or filling areas with huge blocks of colour.

The toddlers took to the paint stick & construction paper activity very differently than the preschoolers I worked with the week before. The toddlers were much more collaborative with each other, drawing on multiple sheets at a time and often drawing on papers that were already coloured on by their friends. It was really interesting to see how the different age groups treated the activity in different ways. The toddlers were also very interested in the sounds the paint sticks could make, using them like drum sticks to make sounds on the table top and on the plastic sun plate I had.

Infants had fun playing with the paint sticks, but it didn't hold their attention for long. I will try new strategies for working with infants in the spring term.

Stamps & Storytelling

While doing the play doh stamping activity, the children turned it into a story by pressing the beads into the play doh and pretending to be making pizzas for a pizza parlour. I also observed the children developing their fine motor skills as they meticulously placed the beads where they wanted them.

The stamping activity went very well with the toddlers. They used the different animal stamps to create scenes and stories, with one child creating a field of sheep with flowers, butterflies, and multiple suns in the sky.

Beads & Self-Expression

Using pipe cleaners and beads, I both witnessed and facilitated preschool children's development of fine motor skills and problem solving. When a child found a bead that wouldn't fit on the pipe cleaner, we searched for beads that would fit and why.

The children also learned how to use a twisting motion to secure two ends of a pipe cleaner, to either make a bracelet or extend a pipe cleaner. With the paper straw beads I brought, some kids played with them like they were rocket ships, highlighting the unique imagination of the children.

Painting Personalities

The toddlers had a great time using the watercolour paints, experimenting with the water and how it affected the pigment in the paint. One child in particular made multiple paintings utilizing the entire colour spectrum. He even did a collaborative painting with me, as I painted a dog lying in the grass, he painted a rainbow overhead.

Some of the preschoolers were already somewhat familiar with how watercolours worked, so today's painting activity was more focussed on mark making and how water affects opacity and texture. The kids made some beautiful abstract work, and each child's personality shines through the kind of marks they put on the paper.