

arts FOR ALL

Wesley Childcare Centre
Artist Educator: Abby Bothen



Artists in Neighborhoods Fall 2025/26
Inspired by Reggio Emilia approach and
How Does Learning Happen?
100 Languages by Loris Malaguzzi



Week One: Site visit
Week Two: Clay painting
Week Three: Straw painting
Week Four: Nature stamping
Week Five: Draw on me wall
Week Six: Lets build a community
Week Seven: Puffy painting
Week Eight: Rainbow tape strips
Week Nine: Creating collage rainbows
Week Ten: Coming full circle with clay play: A celebration!

Final Pedagogical

Documentation

**Wesley Childcare Centre
(Riverdale)**

150 Violet Dr, Hamilton, ON L8E 6B4

Artist Educator: Abby Bothen

Dates: Nov 11 2025- Jan 27 2026



OUR INSPIRATION

Exploring the 100 Languages

WEEK ONE

Clay painting

During week one of programming with the preschoolers at Wesley, the children were given the opportunity to experiment with “clay painting!” The children were each given cardboard squares, Play-Doh, beads, popsicle sticks, and stampers/rollers so that they could experience the sensory aspect of the material while also seeing how they could turn that into their own, colourful tile of

art! At the beginning, the children were prompted with using the Popsicle sticks to spread the Play-Doh on their cardboard, painting with the material and making it stick to the base. As time went on and the children began incorporating their own materials from the centre's art supply, we explored different ways to make the Play-Doh stick, different materials that we could use to create texture, and ways we can cut, stamp, press, and play with the materials!

Both the children and ECE's were completely engaged with the project and made some wonderful observations. During the two hour duration with the children, an ECE observed, "wow! This child never sits this long! They are so engaged!". I could also see other children experimenting further with the Play-Doh and specifically the colours, observing "look! I mixed these and made a new colour!" There were a lot of great conversations happening here and many different ways of experimenting with the material given. What a great way to start off programming!





WEEK TWO

Straw Painting

During week two of program, the preschool children at Wesley were given watered down acrylic paint, watercolour paper sheets, straws, and different sized paint brushes. The children were prompted to dot the acrylic paint on their sheet of paper and blow through their straws, directed at the paper, so that the watered down paint would spread and mix across the sheet. The children in these groups were more interested in painting with the paint brushes and mixing the colours, even using the straws as paint brushes instead of blowing through them! Regardless of how the children used the materials they were given, we continued our conversations about mixing colours, making new (secondary) colours out of the primaries, and how we can experiment with acrylic paint!

The children, just like last week, were again interested in adding materials from the centre's art corner, and these materials included glitter and beads! When one of the children finished their painting, they looked on the shelf and asked, "Miss Abby, I want to add some glitter on mine!" When this child did this, all the children wanted glitter and got to sprinkle it on their artwork! It was amazing to see the children experiment with the paint and the painting tools in different ways, and also thinking creatively to add more to their work!





WEEK THREE

Nature Stamping

The week three project I decided to present to the Wesley preschool group was one made of natural materials mixed with the paint we used the week prior! The children were each given white square sheet cut outs, a bin of pinecones, sticks, and brush to share, and the same watered down acrylic from last week. The children were prompted to dip the natural materials into the paint, and from there they would stamp it on their sheet to make an interesting texture/pattern! This activity was experimental for sure, as many of the prints were not as clear as I had hoped. The most important part, however, was the fact that I could talk to the children about where we find these natural materials (pinecones, sticks, etc), and how we could use them to create artwork.

During the activity, I found that fabric was a nice change rather than using paper, and they enjoyed touching and playing with the soft material! Some children were interested in mixing the paint with their hands and creating hand prints. The children said the paint felt like mud when they put their hands in it! Some children even used the fabric to wipe their hands and decided it could also be used as a towel. This was great to see them use the resources around them when they wanted their hands clean... extremely smart for preschoolers!





WEEK FOUR

Draw on me wall!

Week four of programming was one of the most memorable and interactive weeks. Before going to the Wesley Childcare Centre for our activity, I prepared four large “draw on me” boards (two for each group), where I glued egg cartons, paper rolls, fabric, sheets of bubble wrap, and more onto the large bases. When I brought these in to the children, they were so excited and eager to see what we would be doing this week! When we finally got set up, I gave the children paint sticks and markers to mark make on the drawing wall, and they had a fantastic time drawing on different materials, feeling different textures, and experimenting with the shapes glued on the wall! The Wesley preschoolers were fully engaged for the entirety of the session, and they were able to experience an activity that was both sensory and required free flowing mark making!

One child spent the entire session at this station and was fully engaged! This child loved feeling the textures and material given, and even decided to put the markers through the tubes and boxes, placing the marker in one end and watching it fall down and come out another end! This child focused a lot on how the tools could interact with the drawing board in a playful way, not only an artistic way. This observation certainly made me realize that these children were doing an effective job of showing me and their friends how artwork can also be played with and interacted with in playful ways.





WEEK FIVE

Let's build a community

Week five was a moment of bringing all used materials together to have a conversation about what communities are, why they are important, and what we can do to leave our mark! This activity was inspired by Karyn Callaghan, and her talk with us Artist Educators about a clay “crowd” activity with the children of Reggio Emilia.

During week five, the children were given a large piece of Kraft paper that was taped to their table to act as a tablecloth. Drawn on the paper was a simplistic scene of a long winding road, outlined trees, ponds, and houses which indicated to the children that this was a community, so it was their turn to make their artistic mark! To build onto the community, the children were given low fired clay, paper rolls of different sizes, and drawing materials (paint sticks and markers) so they could explore how to leave their mark in both 2D and 3D ways!

At this point in the program, the children had already used a combination of all these materials given, and in a way this was a great mid-term activity for our 10 week duration. The children were now familiar with these materials given, and even more excited that they had the opportunity to use clay material again, as they all contested that it was their absolute favorite. The children were very interested in filling up every inch of the Kraft paper with colour and art! While doing this, other children were focused on creating 3D sculptures with the clay, paper rolls, and found popsicle sticks from the classroom. Some 3D sculptures turned into ice cream cones and ice cream bowls, and others were houses and other buildings to place in our community. Whatever the children created, there was always a conversation about things we could find in our communities, whether it be food, houses, cars, or people, and as a witness to these conversations, I realized that this week was a pivotal point in program, as the children were discussing with me and each other about what this activity truly meant!







WEEK SIX

Puffy Painting

For week six of program, I decided to deliver another sensory activity to the preschoolers of Wesley Childcare Centre! Though this activity was messy and required patience and lots of mixing, these children showed extreme interest in the materials given and took initiative to help me mix the paint and even choose the colours that they wanted to use in the paint. The children were given a platter with divided compartments in front of them as they sat at their art table. From there, I showed the children the true magic of the puffy paint by pouring glue into each compartment, then adding the shaving cream and mixing! I then dropped food colouring in each compartment (colours of their choice) and they were prompted to mix it in with their friends and the ece's.

I received great feedback from both the children and the ECE's regarding this project. One ECE expressed that they wanted to do the same thing with the EarlyON group, and the preschoolers continued to ask for this activity weeks after it was completed! This amazing feedback certainly helped me gauge what the children and ECE's liked to see in their classroom, and I was more than happy to have introduced something new to the children.

During this activity, the children were also given paper and popsicle sticks to apply the puffy paint with. One child got the puffy paint on their hands and asked for another fresh paper before cleaning their hands. When I gave it to them, the child made hand prints and discovered that the puffy paint worked for that too! Without a prompt to do so, this child showed extreme interest in experimenting with the material and also experimenting with different ways of mark making.





WEEK SEVEN

Rainbow Tape Strips

Week seven at Wesley was full of experimentation and new creations for the preschoolers! This week the children were given long strands of tape attached to popsicle sticks, coloured cellophane, coloured construction paper, and coloured tissue paper! This week's activity was highly inspired by the ARTASIA 2025 activity titled TIME, and the different ways we can create with simplistic materials. The children were prompted to cut out shapes using safety scissors, draw on these shapes, and stick them to the long strands of tape. From there I helped them tape the other side to seal the stickiness, and from there they had a mobile rainbow strip that could blow in the wind and be spun around! Adding the popsicle stick on the end really helped the children figure out what they could do with the finished product, whether it be to walk with it, play with it, or spin it around!

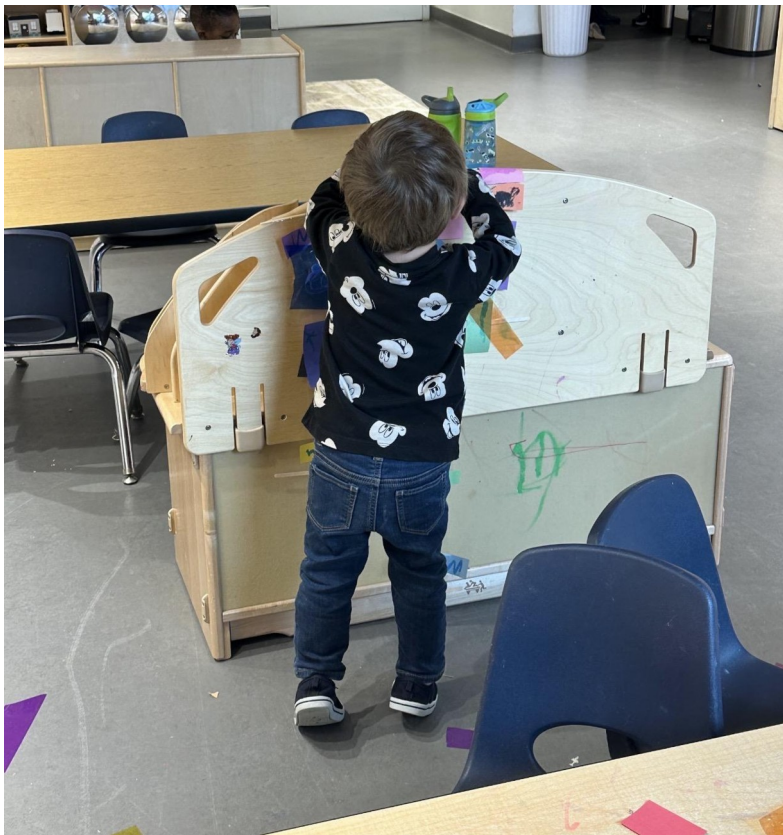
The children really interacted with this activity, and gravitated towards the new material introduced, cellophane. I prompted the children to look through the coloured sheets of cellophane, and then everything else would look like a tint of that colour! We did this with every colour in the package, making observations that, “every time I put the yellow cellophane to my eyes, everything looks yellow!” There was pure excitement in the room to identify all these colours and experiment with this new material that most of the preschoolers hadn't used before.

When my first preschool group was lining up to go outside as per their daily routine, one child was all dressed in their winter attire and still had their finished rainbow strip in their hand! In line, they were spinning it around in the air and waving it around like a flag, and even when they took it outside, they never let it out of their sight! This child was playing on the outdoor bikes and the other toys and continued to hold their rainbow tape strip, seeing how it could blow in the wind outside!









WEEK EIGHT

Creating rainbows!

As we approached the near end of programming, I thought it would be great to bring the Wesley preschoolers an activity that required materials we have used before, to compare how they reacted then versus how they react now with them. The children were given cardboard cut outs of rainbows, glitter glue, and the same cellophane, construction paper, and tissue paper pieces as last week! I also brought the children paint sticks, which was a material that they had used very often, so they could additionally colour on their rainbow collages.

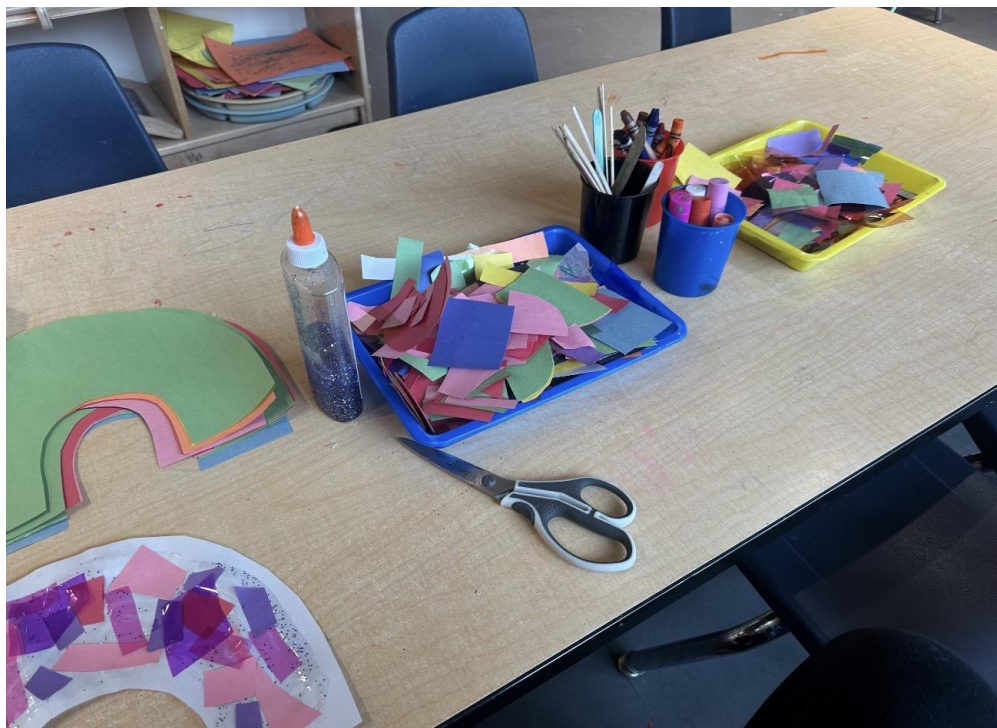
Both the children and ECE's loved this activity, as they were able to create rainbows of all different colours and styles in a collage type form. The children especially loved the glitter glue, and we together came to the conclusion that it looked magical! With this as a base and the cellophane, paper, and tissue paper layered on top, these rainbow collages looked fun, happy, and completely colourful!

When the children were wrapping up their activity, I decided to hang their rainbows up on their art drawing board! One child came over to me while I was doing this and said, "teacher, I want to put mine up there!" With my help, this child got to stick their rainbow up with their friends' creations! The colour filled the room this week, and the children wanted to keep making more and more rainbows that could be hung up on the wall, given to their friends, or given to their parents!









WEEK NINE

Coming full circle with clay play!

To wrap up our 100 languages inspired AIN programming, I decided to bring the children an activity that, every week, they continued to ask for: Playdoh! I have concluded that the nine weeks combined have had a theme of introducing new materials combined with familiar materials, so I am wrapping up with an activity that explores the different materials we discovered over the term, while figuring out that our possibilities are endless! There are more and more materials for us to find, use, and create with. For this activity the children used playdoh, coloured beads, pom poms, paper, and rollers/stampers to re-visit the beginning of our program, but also to show their continual growth of curiosity and discovery with the materials. This last week's exhibition acted as a celebration of all that we have learned over the last nine sessions, and how we discovered more of the 100 languages together!

For the exhibition, "I can" prompts were posted on their art board along with a booklet I made for the centre, full of our activities and my documentation! What a great and exciting way to end the term with Wesley Childcare Centre!











-----FINAL

REFLECTION-----

So what? Now what? What did these programs, activities, and learning mean?

Regarding my personal observations, this program means that these children have the ability to prove to me, themselves, and their peers that they can use the 100 languages, continually explore them, and be creative in ways that we could have never imagined. The preschoolers at Wesley Childcare Centre taught me so much about my own practice, my own creativity, and that my role as an Artist Educator is to make room for these children to leave their mark, because they are more than capable! The wonderful supervisor and ECE's at Wesley Childcare Centre continually showed interest in the learning and creativity that was happening in the classroom for ten weeks, and without them it wouldn't have been possible.

This program revealed the importance of conversations around our artwork and how these art activities could explore entirely new ways of learning, thinking, and problem solving. To see these preschool children complete the activities with pure creativity, zero judgement, and genuine interest is a wonderful thing to observe, but also helps us realize that they are completely capable, they have complex minds, and they are the future of us! With the preschoolers at Wesley, I aimed to let the materials do the talking and guide us in our open ended, creative, art journey. The children not only explored different ways of creation, but they tried new techniques, shared big ideas, and most importantly, did so without judgement or fear, as we welcomed a space of endless possibilities and pure creativity.

Beyond the artwork, getting to know these children and the staff was truly special in itself, and I have become so grateful to have been able to work in a space as welcoming, positive, and *fun* as Wesley Childcare Centre.

100 languages

NO WAY. THE HUNDRED
IS THERE

The child
is made of one hundred.
The child has
a hundred languages
a hundred hands
a hundred thoughts
a hundred ways of thinking
of playing, of speaking.
A hundred always a hundred
ways of listening
of marveling of loving
a hundred joys
for singing and understanding
a hundred worlds

to discover

a hundred worlds

to invent

a hundred worlds

to dream.

The child has

a hundred languages

(and a hundred hundred hundred more)

but they steal ninety-nine.

The school and the culture

separate the head from the body.

They tell the child:

to think without hands

to do without head

to listen and not to speak

to understand without joy

to love and to marvel

only at Easter and Christmas.

They tell the child:

to discover the world already there

and of the hundred

hey steal ninety-nine.

They tell the child:

that work and play

reality and fantasy

science and imagination

sky and earth

reason and dream

are things

that do not belong together.

And thus they tell the child

that the hundred is not there.

The child says:

No way. The hundred is there.

Loris Malaguzzi

[illegible]

