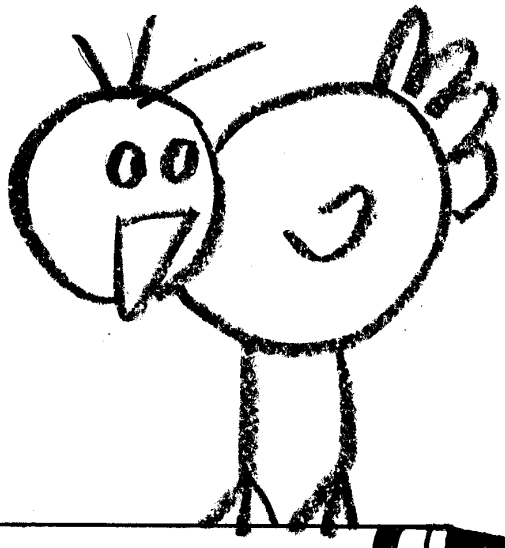
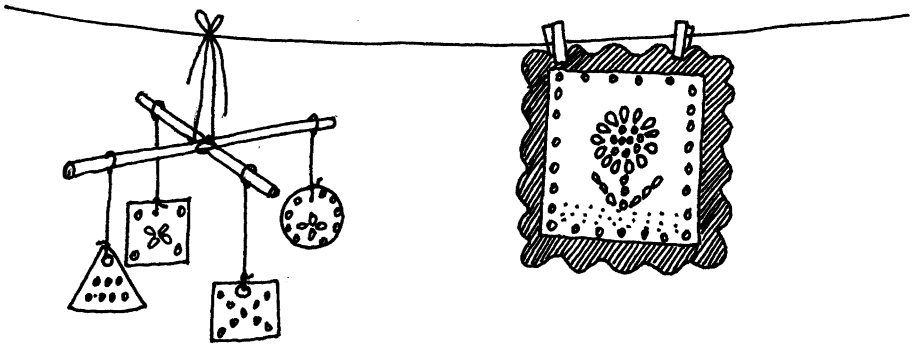
ART

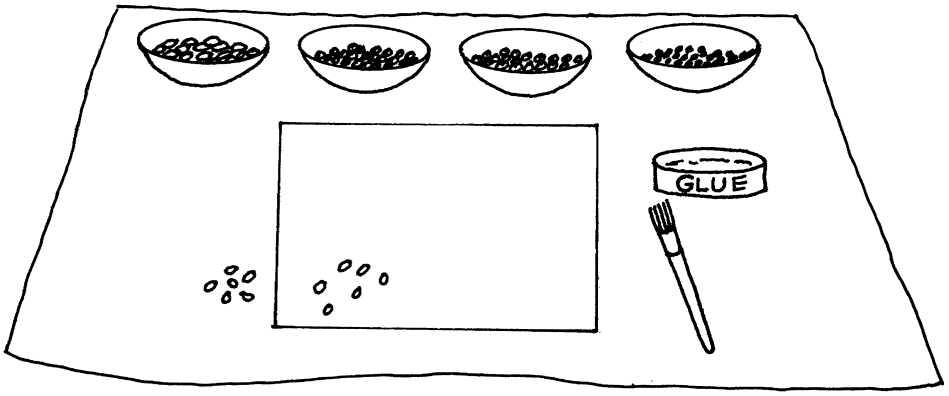


Seed Collage

3 to 6

Submitted by Romania





Purpose: Children delight in touching things and exploring textures and sizes. Using seeds as part of a collage offers children a tactile way to experience 2-dimensional surfaces. Sensory exploration is essential for physical and cognitive development in young children. While making a seed collage, children can discuss nature and how plants grow. Seeds can also be used to sort, categorize, and count. Making a collage, the children learn vocabulary words such as *small, big, soft, smooth, rough, bumpy, scratchy*, etc.

HOME CONNECTION

Remind parents that tactile exploration is an important way that children learn. Parents should encourage children to touch and feel materials used in cooking, gardening, and household chores. A parent and child can make a collage together using seeds or other material available from home.

Materials:

- water in small jar or plastic cup
- separate containers (bowls) for seeds
- a variety of seeds - watermelon, pumpkin, sunflowers, squash
- white glue
- paint brush
- newspapers
- thick paper

Preparation:

1. Cover a table or floor with newspaper.

2. Put watermelon, pumpkin, sunflower, and squash seeds into separate bowls.

3. Dilute white glue with water in a small jar or plastic cup.

4. Give each child a piece of thick paper and a paint brush.

Activity: The children paint the glue onto the paper where they want the seeds to be glued. Young children should be guided in this process. Talk with children about selecting the seeds they want for their collages. They choose which seeds to use and where to place them. Talk about how the picture will feel and look as they choose the seeds. They can sprinkle the seeds like rain falling onto the glued area. Allow the glue to dry. Lift paper, shake off the loose seeds, and return them to the bowls.

Extensions and variations:

- A teacher may select a theme for the collages, such as shapes, birds, or faces.

- A group of children can work together on one large collage.

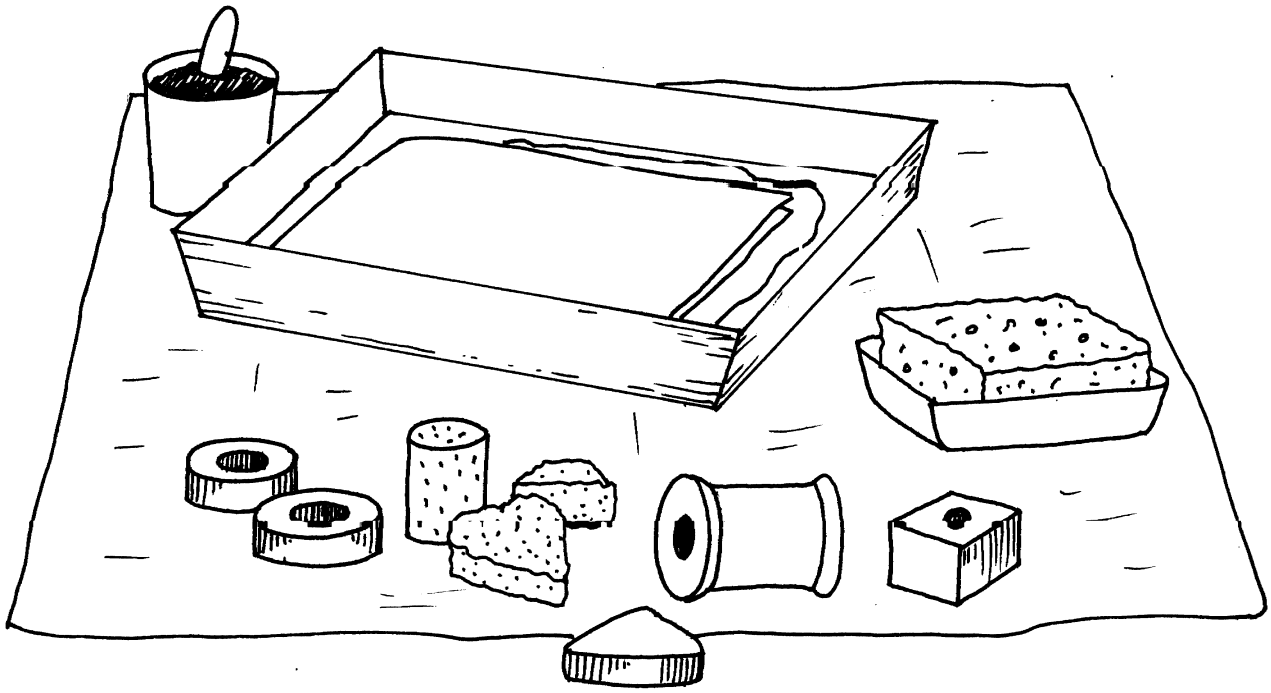
- Seeds may be sorted by attributes for a mathematics activity. Begin by placing all the seeds in one container. Ask the children to put like seeds in piles. Later, ask them how they decided to group the seeds. Play a guessing game to see if someone can guess how a group was sorted—for example, by color or size.

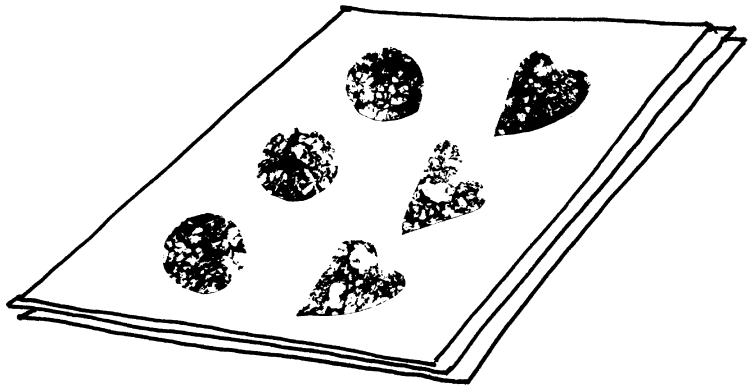
- After the children have finished their collages, place the remaining seeds in one container. Ask the children to estimate how many seeds are in the container and then count them.

- Older children may want to make several seed collages, cut out them out, and string them together to make a mobile.

- Older children may sketch out a design or picture, place the seeds in their pictures, and then paint the background design or picture with watercolors.

3 to 6





HOME CONNECTION

Parents and children can work on this activity together to make personalized wrapping paper for birthdays and holidays.

Purpose: This activity gives children the experience of transferring images from a 3-dimensional object to a 2-dimensional surface. Printmaking is a method of creating an image by transferring the surface of an object to a piece of paper or another surface.

Printmaking can promote problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. As each child selects from among a collection of objects, she has to decide where to imprint the image on paper, how many objects to use, and how often to imprint each one. Printmaking also develops fine motor and visual discrimination skills. The idea of gathering objects found at home or in nature illustrates a resourcefulness necessary in daily life.

Materials:

newspapers
white or colored paper
sponge or folded paper towels on a tray
tempera paint - several colors

collection of three-dimensional objects such as: bottle caps, small wooden scraps, box tops, seashells, spools, nuts and bolts, cookie cutters, erasers, small sponges cut into shapes, etc.

Preparation:

1. Soak a moistened sponge or folded paper towel with tempera paint.

2. Press the selected object into the sponge or paper towel

3. Stamp the object onto the paper.

4. Repeat the process using the same or different objects, as many times as desired.

Activity: The designs of younger children are not likely to resemble a pattern. As they mature and have more printmaking opportunities, patterns may emerge. Young children need time to explore and discover, without teachers suggesting what they should do.

With older children, help them discover that repeating shapes and colors make a pattern. Teachers can show designs in fabrics, wallpaper, and other decorative materials to children. Use open-ended questions to encourage the children to explore the idea of patterns. "Where have you seen patterns?"

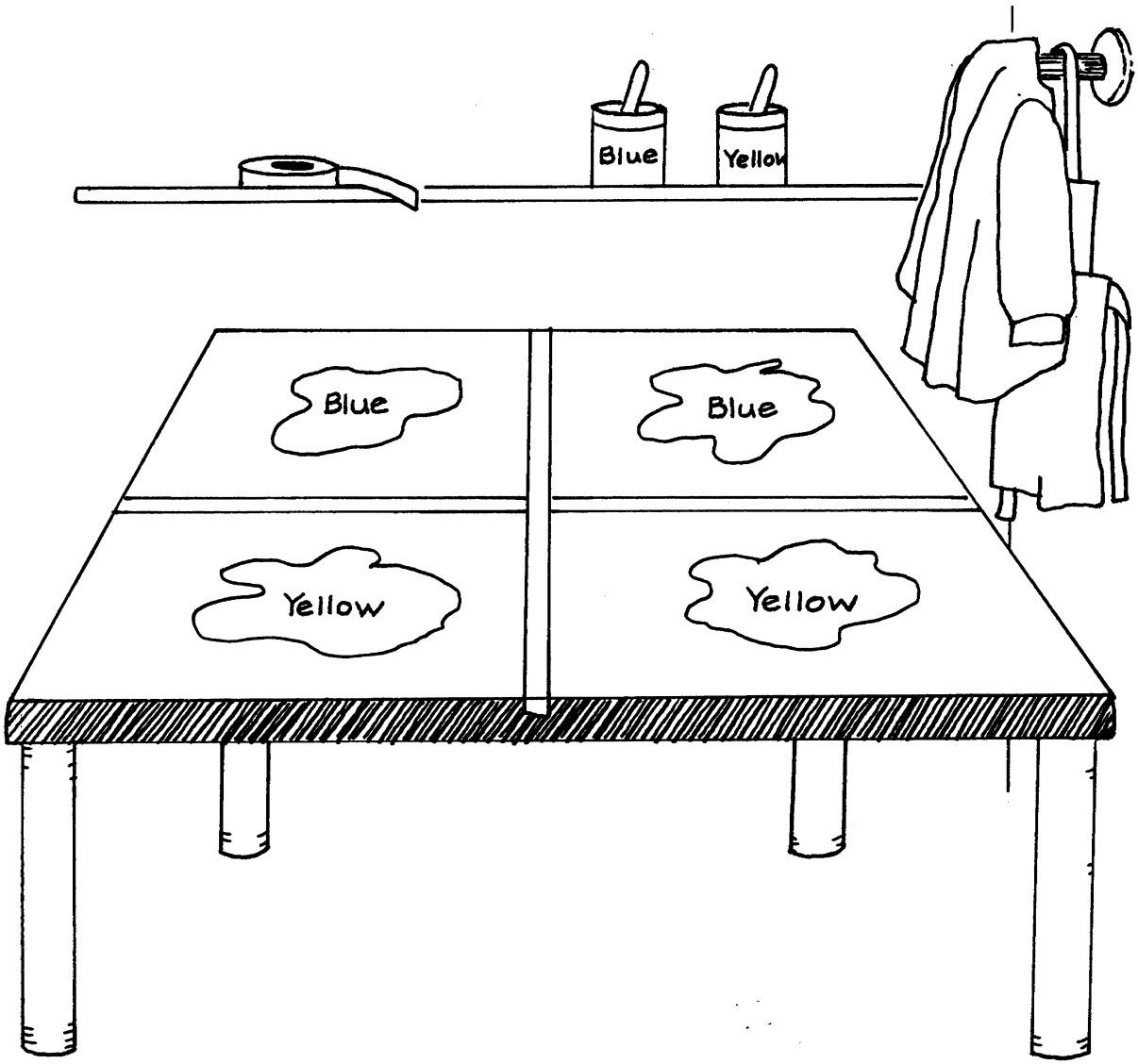
Extensions and variations:

- Use sponge shapes (stars, triangles, diamonds, circles, etc.) for printing objects. The sponge shapes should be cut by a teacher using scissors.

- Take children on a nature walk and collect items from the environment for printing.

Finger Painting

4 to 6



HOME CONNECTION

Emphasize to parents that young children learn by doing. Children should not be inhibited by worries that they will get dirty at school. Let parents know that smocks will be provided for painting activities. Parents should send children dressed in play clothes, ready for play and exploration!

Purpose: Finger painting is a familiar early childhood activity. It encourages the child's sense of touch and discovery of how colors change or form new colors when mixed together. When done collectively, finger painting also encourages social interaction as children paint and discover together.

Materials: masking tape, smocks, finger paint: blue, yellow, red

Preparation:

1. Select a clean washable surface area (table) for painting and 2 jars of finger paint (use primary colors).

2. Place masking tape on the surface of the table to separate the space into 4 equal sections. Assign 2 children to one side of the table and give them the same color of paint. Assign the other 2 children to the other side of the table; give them the other color paint. Let them paint by themselves.

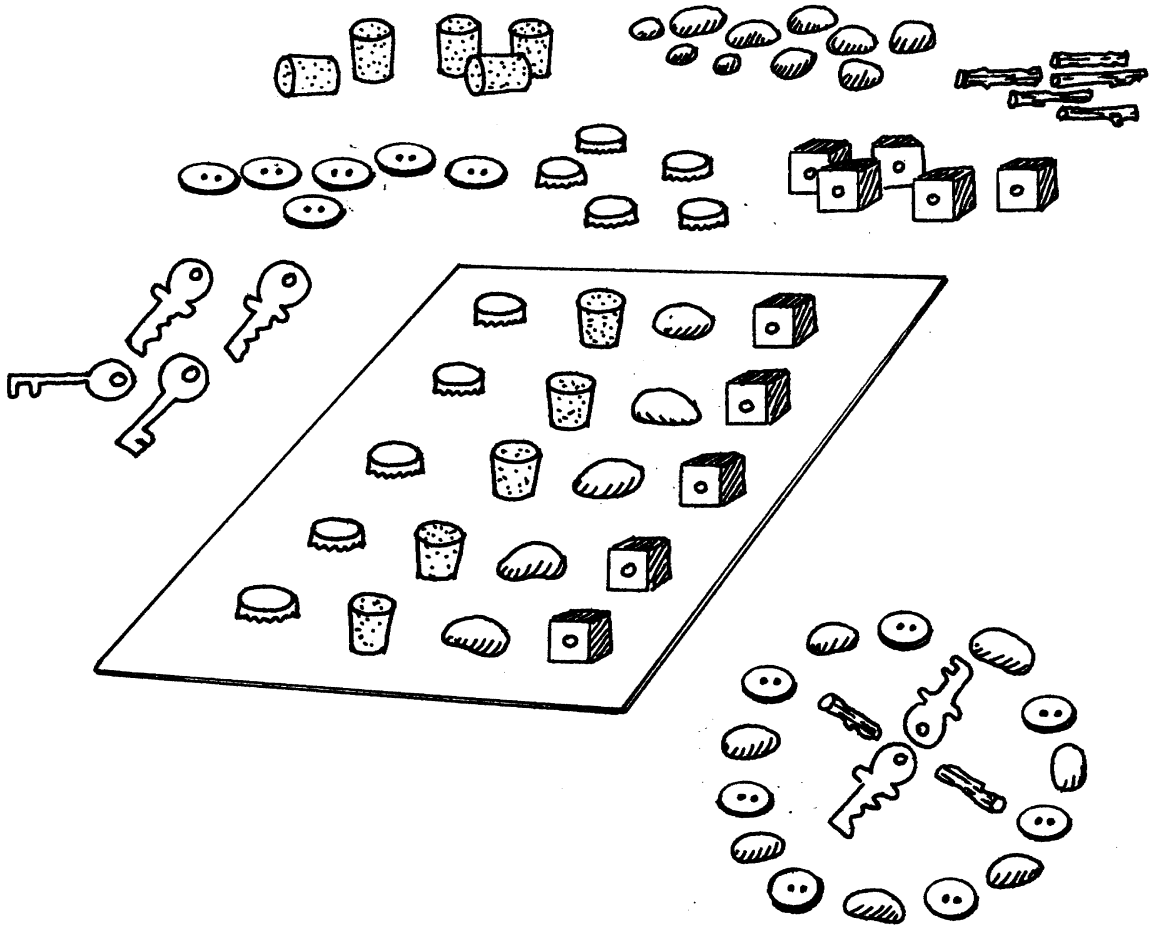
3. Remove the masking tape and allow the children to paint more freely, without regard to space restrictions. As they begin to work jointly, children will see how colors change as they are mixed together. They will also communicate with each other as they share their sense of excitement about the finger painting activity.

Activity: Tell the children that they are conducting a science experiment. Explain that for a short time they must finger paint in their own sections, defined by the tape. Show each child her section and her paint. If children ask for the other color, explain that in a little while they will have the other color, but for now each child must use the color in front of her. When you see that the children's interest in finger painting is waning, remove the masking tape and tell the children that they can now paint across the table with their partners. Often, children paint toward one another and begin to talk. As they mix the paints, the colors change and new colors emerge. When the children are finished, the teacher should try to find space on the table to write the names of the children who created the painting. The teacher asks, "What happened to the colors?" She explains that all colors come from mixing the primary colors of red, yellow, and blue.

Extensions and variations:

- Make a "print" of the painting. Take a sheet of newsprint and put it onto the painted surface. Press gently and carefully lift the paper.

- Use different combinations to make new colors.



HOME CONNECTION

Send a note home to parents, encouraging them to incorporate pattern recognition into daily activities. Parents and children can make a game of looking for patterns in their homes and outdoors. While walking or riding together, parents and children can invent sound patterns and take turns repeating each other's patterns.

Purpose: Recognizing patterns is a key to mathematical thinking. Number systems are based on sets of patterns. Children need to work with patterns so that they can gain an understanding of concepts in mathematics. These experiences should be in a visual, verbal, and physical format. Looking for patterns is necessary for making generalizations, seeing relationships, and understanding the logic and order of mathematics.

Materials:

bottle caps	stones
keys	corks
buttons	small sticks
unit blocks	colored cubes

Preparation:

1. With the child or children watching, lay out a pattern with objects—for example, cork, stone, cork, stone.

Activity: Ask a child to extend the pattern using the objects in the same order. Encourage children to talk about the pattern that they see. Talking about the pattern will get them used to analyzing patterns. Next ask the child to copy the pattern using new materials.

Extensions and variations:

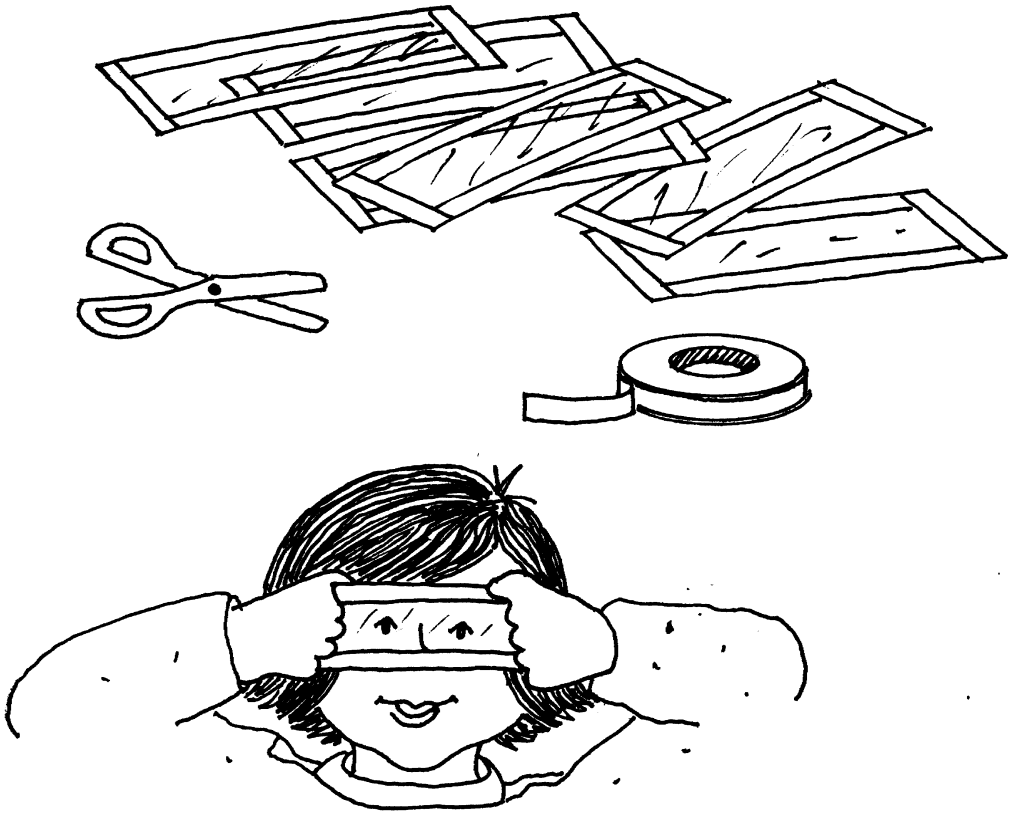
- If a child does not want to explore patterns, suggest that he play as he chooses. He may find a pattern on his own.

- Have the children create patterns with objects, action, and words. Some examples are: snap, clap, snap, clap; hum, sing, sing, hum, sing, sing, hum; stand, sit, kneel, stand, sit, kneel.

- Go on a walk inside or outside the school and look for patterns.

See-Through Strips

4 to 6



HOME CONNECTION

Since cellophane may be difficult to acquire, ask parents to save cellophane candy wrappers or flower wrappings for this project.

Purpose: Color see-through strips will help children to learn how colors combine to make new colors—specifically, how the combination of two primary colors creates a secondary color. The children can relate the colors to familiar objects.

Materials:
scissors
masking tape
red, yellow, and blue cellophane papers or acetate strips

Preparation:

1. Collect red, blue, and yellow cellophane or acetate strips. Cut 2 of each color into 12 cm. x 5 cm. strips.

2. If using acetate strips, cover the sharp edges with masking tape.

Activity: Gather 4 children together. Give each child a color strip. Have them first look through their individual color strips by holding them up to the light. Each child names something that is the color of the strip—for example, blue is the color of water or the sky. Each child should have a turn.

Put children with different color strips into pairs. Each child in the pair looks through the two strips to see what new colors are made. The teacher now gives each pair another strip, making sure that each pair has a set of red, blue, and yellow. Allow children to explore and exchange color strips. When the teacher feels interest is waning, call the children together. Let each pair name the colors produced, and name something that is that color.

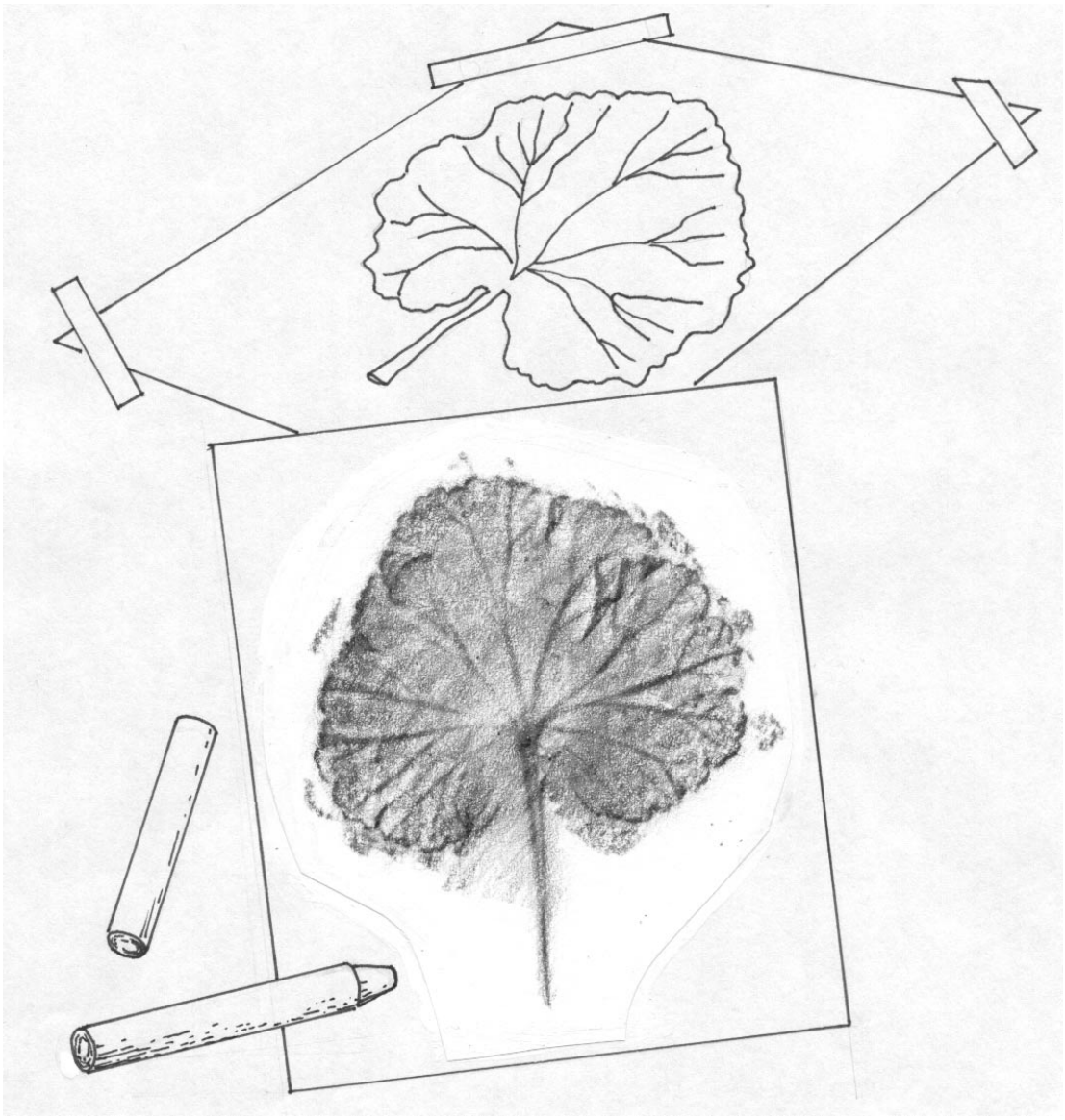
Extensions and variations:

- Allow children to cut up pieces of cellophane or acetate and make their own color combinations. They could tape the acetate pieces together to make stained glass windows.

- As an extension of the original activity, the teacher might encourage the expression of emotional and impressionistic responses of the children caused by colors. For example, yellow is the color of sunshine and it makes me feel happy. Blue is the color of the ocean and I like the waves in the ocean. Orange is the color of fire and it makes me feel hot.

Rubbings

4 to 6



HOME CONNECTION

This activity can easily be adapted to do at home. A child and parent may decide to do a rubbing from an object at home.

Purpose: By making rubbings, a child learns to produce a "picture copy" of a particular object. The process of rubbing develops fine motor coordination and muscle strength because the child must manipulate a crayon and control the paper and crayon. The child also learns about textures.

Materials:

lightweight white paper
chalk, if crayons are not available
crayons (covers removed)
tape

collection of objects with textures that feel bumpy, rough, ragged, coarse, etc.: coins, leaves, keys, combs, tiles, tree bark, lace scraps, shells, etc.

Preparation:

1. Each child chooses an appealing object or two from the classroom collection or collects objects on a walk.

2. Place a sheet of paper over one or many of the objects listed above. For younger children, it may be necessary to tape the corners of the paper to the table.

3. Next, make a rubbing by taking a large crayon or piece of chalk, holding it on its side, and gently rubbing back and forth over the surface of the object. The impression should instantly appear.

Activity: Explain to the children that they will make copies of collected objects and that the copies will be made in a special way. Young children will be excited by what happens when they do the rubbing. For them, the process is more important than the product. Vocabulary words such as *over, under, thickness,* and *flatness* should be emphasized throughout the activity.

Extensions and variations:

- In pairs or small groups, children can complete a rubbing and then ask their friends if they recognize the object.

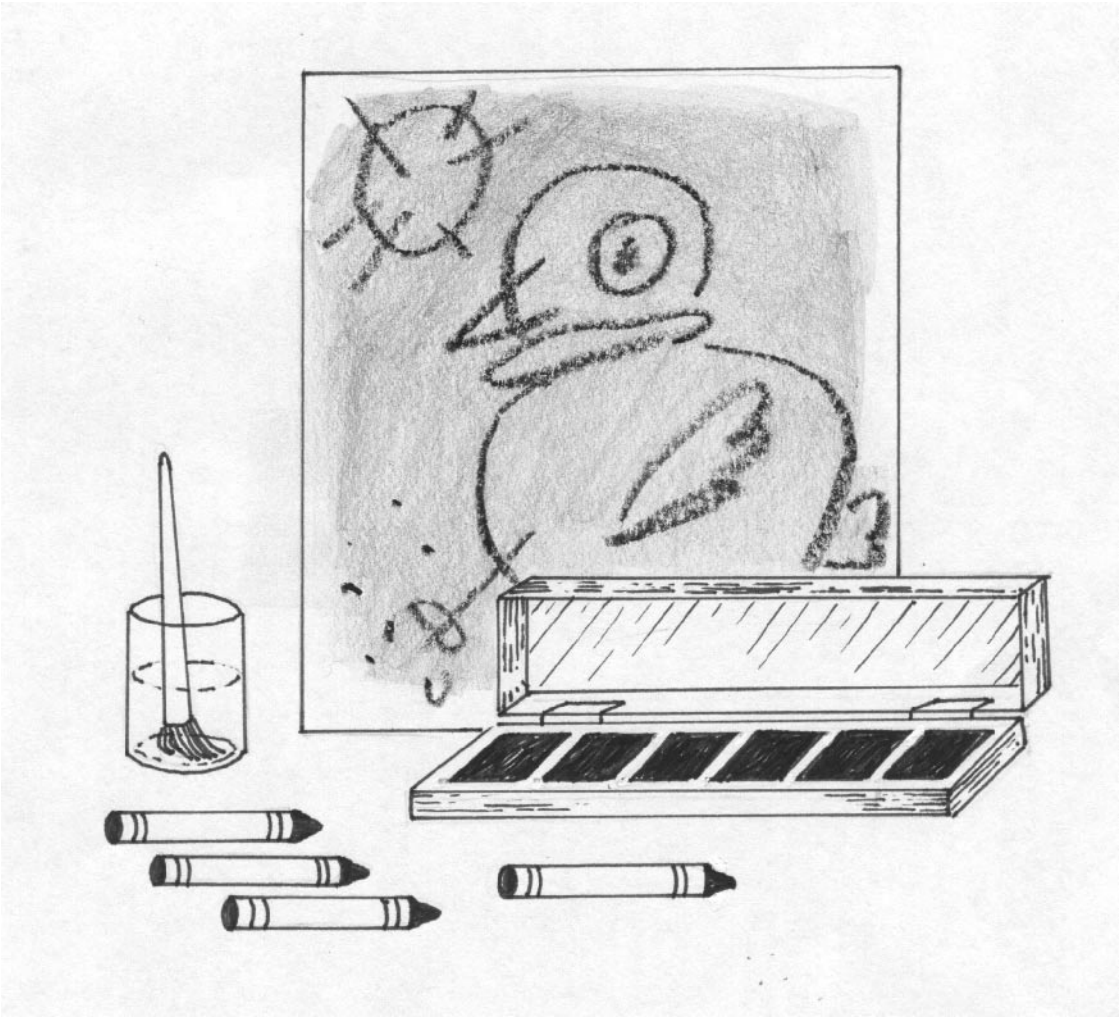
- Take a "Rubbings Walk" around the classroom or outdoors. Children will need crayons and paper in hand!

- Wash over the rubbings with watercolors.

- For older children, separate rubbings could be put together to create a larger picture. For example, a child could create the face of a person by using the rubbings of coins or buttons for eyes and tree bark for hair! Ask the children to use their imaginations in designing pictures and scenes.

Wax Resist

4 to 6



HOME CONNECTION

In a short note to parents, list the steps their children followed to create their wax-resist pictures. Emphasize that parents should value the "art," even if it does not appear polished and realistic. Encourage them to display their children's art work proudly at home.

Purpose: Wax resist is an art technique in which pictures drawn with crayons are washed over with watercolors, thereby creating a "magical" effect. A wax resist is a simple project that is appropriate for younger and older children who enjoy exploring the resist process and experimenting with color, textures, designs, and drawings. This activity promotes small muscle development, decision-making, and planning skills.

Materials:

white paper	container of water
crayons	watercolors
newspapers	paint brushes

Preparation:

1. Put newspapers on the tables or floor where children will work.

2. Give each child a piece of white paper, crayons, and watercolors. Provide a container of water for rinsing paint brushes.

Activity: Ask the children to draw a design or picture on the paper with crayons. Encourage them to press firmly with the crayons. When the drawing is finished, the child paints over the picture with watercolors.

Their creations come to life after the watercolors are applied; the children will call the discovery magic. Clarify by explaining, "Not magic, science! It happens because the wax in the crayons coats the paper and protects it from the water. The wax resists the water."

Extensions and variations:

- Instead of using watercolors, brush black ink, tempera paint, or food coloring over the entire paper.

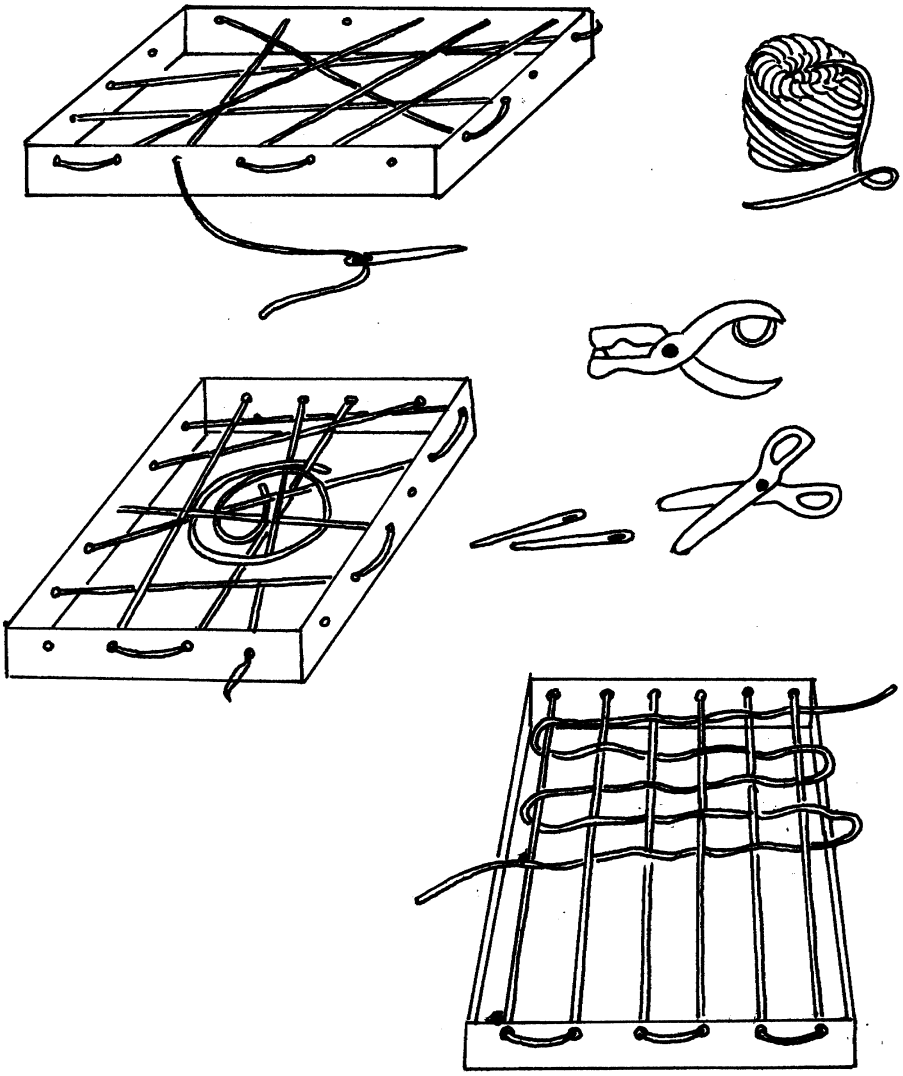
- Create a different effect by drawing with crayons on black paper and wash over it with diluted white tempera paint.

- Connect the activity with thematic teaching units or favorite storybooks that have been read aloud in class. If the class is learning about leaves, children can use leaves to make wax resists. Or, ask the children to make a wax resist that illustrates their favorite part of a story.

Box Weaving

4 to 6

Submitted by Lithuania



HOME CONNECTION

Often parents and other family members have skills and talents that they will happily share if they are asked. For example, many relatives may welcome the opportunity to come to the classroom and demonstrate weaving techniques. Have a visitor who weaves come and talk to the children about how she first learned to weave. Have the visitor stay and weave while the children work.

Purpose: Weaving teaches children patterns and the basic principle of how fabric is made. It encourages them to use their small motor skills, practice sequential thinking, and understand spatial relationships.

Materials:

- lid of a box (preferably cardboard)
- variety of colorful yarn
- scissors
- hole punch
- plastic needle

Preparation:

1. To prepare the lid for weaving, punch holes around the entire edge of the box lid approximately 1-2 cm. apart.

Activity: With 2 or 3 children watching, demonstrate how to put the end of the yarn through a hole and tie it securely (make the knot on the inside of the box lid). Put the yarn through a needle and let the children thread the yarn across the box lid, going back and forth into different holes. Patterns may begin to appear. Demonstrate how a second colored yarn will add more pattern and color to the weavings. A third colored yarn can be added in the middle by doing finger weaving. Let the children make their own patterns.

Extensions and variations:

- As the children become more experienced at handling yarn on a threaded needle, they can be encouraged to move on to the next step. String yarn from top to bottom of box lid. Using a piece of yarn threaded on a needle, the children will weave over and under, over and under, experiencing how real fabric is woven. Start at one end, leaving a tail to tie later. Make sure the yarn is stretched evenly and stays taut and rigid. (Children will need help threading the yarn. They can also do finger weaving using thicker yarn, which is less frustrating for little fingers.)

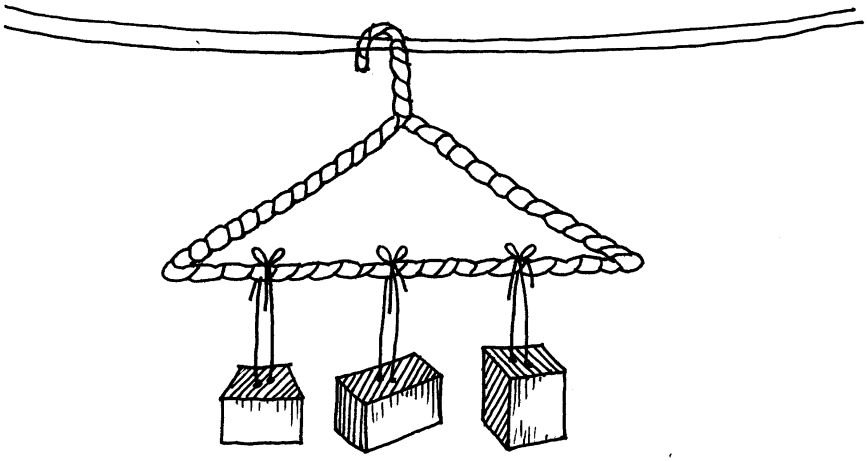
- For more artistic expression, beads and feathers can be incorporated into the weaving.

- Children like knowing about weaving. Encourage them to examine and think about things that are woven. Also encourage them to think about nature's weavers: spiders and birds.

- In Lithuania, teachers secure a fishing net over a box or wooden frame. Children weave ribbons in and out of the fishing net, creating their own designs as they weave.

Food Carton Mobiles

5 to 6



Purpose: These mobiles are "hanging constructions" or 3-dimensional creations assembled from empty food cartons. By creating mobiles, children explore the concepts of balance, gravity, and weight. Early experiences of this kind contribute to mathematical thinking about spatial relationships and equations. As they experiment with color, shape, and design, children express themselves artistically and begin to develop aesthetic appreciation for self-made objects.

Materials:

- glue
- pencils
- string, yarn, or pipe cleaners
- scraps of colored construction paper, crepe paper, yarn, or colored tape
- scissors
- tape
- one wire clothes hanger per child
- small food cartons or boxes

Preparation:

1. Before involving the children in this activity, wrap the clothes hangers with colored tape, crepe paper, or yarn. Cover all sharp edges to prevent scrapes and cuts.

HOME CONNECTION

Point out to families the usefulness of "throw away" materials. Encourage children and families to collect objects of potential use for art and science activities. A family recycling project for collecting such objects is a worthwhile and enjoyable activity.

2. Ask the children to select some food cartons to hang from the hangers.

3. Tie or tape varying lengths of string, yarn, or pipe cleaners to the cartons.

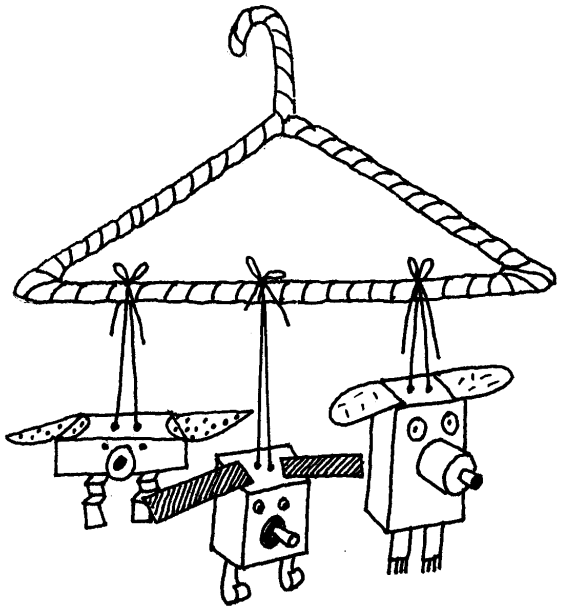
Activity: Mobiles can be complex or simplified for young children. Offering different materials for attaching the boxes to the hangers is one way of adapting the activity to differing ages. For example, 4 year olds can attach thick pieces of yarn using pre-cut pieces of tape. Parents or other adult helpers can assist younger children to tie the yarn to the hanger.

To begin this activity gather the children and ask if anyone can stand on one foot. Ask for volunteers to demonstrate. Point out that the child is "balancing" her weight on one foot. Distribute pencils (or sticks) and ask the children to try to balance them horizontally across two fingers. Give them a few minutes to try. Next, display a mobile to the group. Point out that the horizontal line of the mobile is balanced by the hanging objects. Tell the children that they are going to make their own mobiles. The children then begin work on their mobiles, tying the cartons to the hangers and experimenting with different placement of the cartons to determine the best positions for balance.

This activity can be done in two parts for older children who may want to spend time decorating their boxes before attaching them to the hanger. Younger children should be focused on the idea of attaching the boxes to achieve a balanced mobile. When the mobiles are complete, ask the children what happens if they move the strings, yarn, or pipe cleaners holding the boxes closer together or farther apart. Have them experiment and make comparisons. Hang the mobiles around the room.

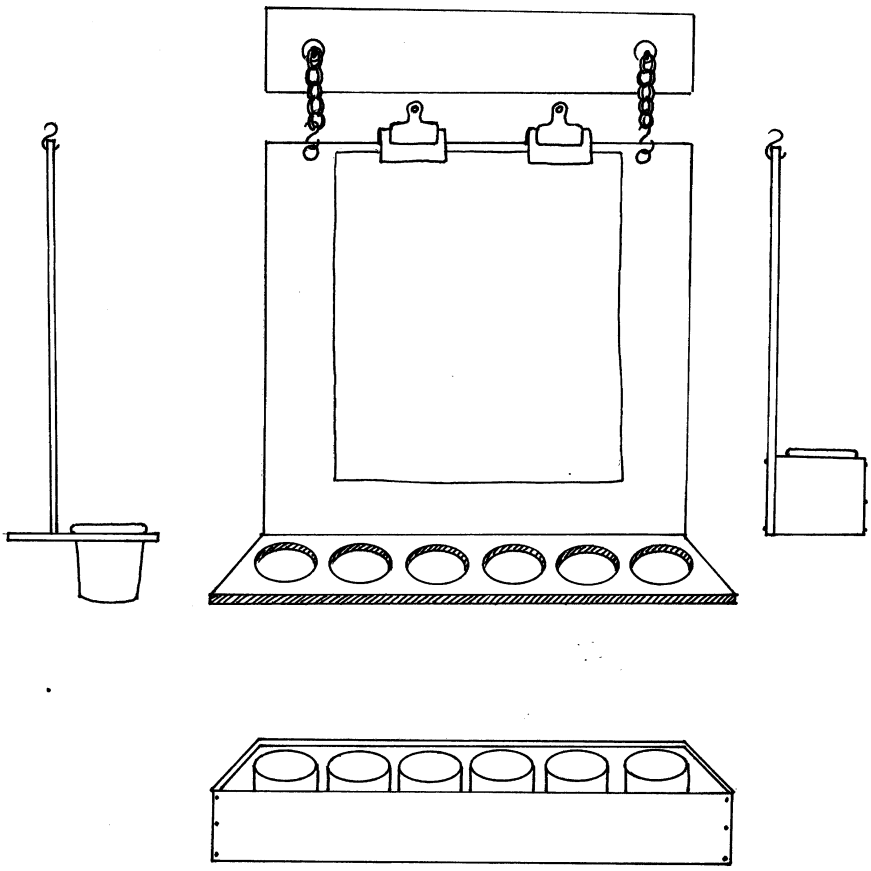
Extensions and variations:

- Create mobiles that relate to a teaching theme, such as an "autumn" mobile.
- Older children can work collaboratively on a larger mobile.



Making an Art Easel

3 to 6



Purpose: An easel is important classroom equipment. The easel described here is portable so that it can be used indoors and outdoors. It can be hung on a wall at an appropriate height or moved outside and hung on a fence. Young children need a space to paint; finding these spaces in a classroom needs to be well thought out. Handy parents can help to make the easel.

HOME CONNECTION

Handy parent! Come help us make a classroom easel.

Materials:

- a wooden board about 60 cm. x 62 cm., weatherized, if possible
- 2 metal clamps
- drill
- 2 S-shaped hooks
- wood (12 cm. x 60 cm.)
- nails

Preparation:

1. Cut out easel board.

2. Drill holes in top for hooks.

3. Cut board for paint holder and cut holes to hold paint containers, measuring the hole size carefully. Or, make a paint box to hold paints and nail onto easel board at base.

The diagram shows this easel from the side and front views. It also shows how it can be hung from the wall. The easel with the box can sit on a table because it is designed to stand alone. Use lightweight wood. The easel with tray holes is lightweight and easily moved.

Tips for Painting: When children are painting, a piece of paper or plastic underneath makes clean-up easier. Put tops over paint when not in use.

Activity: Provide children with a selection of colors of paint, paper, and brushes. While 3 and 4 year olds could start out using 2 or 3 colors, as the year progresses they can easily use 5 or 6 colors. The experienced 6-year-old painter can select from 6 to 8 colors at a time, or more.

Allow the children to experiment freely with the paint and brushes on paper. Give them as much time as necessary and let them paint more than one picture. With exploration children learn techniques of painting and begin to choose materials and methods appropriate for their creations.

Extensions and variations:

- Set out large chalk pieces for chalk drawings.

- For variety, cut paper into various shapes (round, hearts, etc.) for easel use.

- Use different implements for painting: feathers, cotton swabs, crumpled newspaper, rags, etc.