

Playgroup Plus

Let's Create!

Ideas for art, craft and creative play at Playgroup





SYDNEY

GFS SYDNEY is an Anglican organization that operates in the
Diocese of Sydney
and is part of a world wide organization

GFS SYDNEY supports Christian ministry to children and women
by providing resources and creating opportunities
for them to share their faith.

GFS Sydney Inc.
P.O. Box 374
Emu Plains
N.S.W. 2750

<http://gfs-sydney.org>
info@gfs-sydney.org

ABN 74-632-266-415

©GFS Sydney Inc.

Let's Create!

Ideas for art, craft and creative play at Playgroup



**A 'Playgroup Plus' Program
encouraging creativity
written by Noelene Beer**

Let's Create!

The ability to create is a very important part of being human. We are made in the image of The Great Creator and there lies within each one of us many creative possibilities.

The young child learns largely through his senses..seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling. At Playgroup, we have the opportunity to provide the young child with a wide range of experiences that, through stimulating his senses, will assist real learning to take place, about himself and about his world.

*With Preschooler's creativity,
it is the **EXPERIENCE** that
matters,
not the end result!*

We need to help parents understand that the messy painting or collage is a valuable signpost to where the child is on his or her creative journey and should be valued as such, whether it looks stunning or not!



When preparing preschool activities, always use non-toxic glues and paints and check that there are no sharp edges on materials.

When preparing food, do not use nuts or peanut butter, as many children today have severe allergies to nuts. Avoid highly coloured cordials and try promoting the drinking of water.

Encourage parents to dress their children in old clothes so that the child is not afraid to experiment creatively, for fear of getting into trouble for marking their good clothes. Have some aprons or painting smocks available and warm soapy water to clean up after messy art, eg finger painting.

Praise the child's result and display his work, always writing his name on his work in lower case letters eg Samuel. From about 3 years of age, ask the child to tell you about his painting and write on the bottom of the page what he has said. This is the beginning of conveying to him that the written word conveys a story.

Remember that not every child will love to paint, but his creativity may lie in building creations in the sandpit...praise him for this work and sometimes take a photo of what he has made.

The following pages contain suggestions for Playgroup Creative activities. Obviously they will vary with the age of the chn. in your group. If you observe that chn really love an activity, provide it often as it will encourage them on their creative journey!

Glue

You can use a PVA non toxic glue or a "Clag" type glue, or make your own from a cornflour and water mixture. For very young children the gluing process is best when they paint a piece of paper with a wide brush or sponge or their own hands.

Then they can place whatever they choose onto the glued surface. Later they will develop the skill to put glue on the back of what they are using and press it onto the paper.

Try using coloured glue...add food colouring to the glue.

FREE COLLAGE

Use lots of different things. Place them in separate containers so the child can clearly see the choice he is making;

- Shapes of coloured paper [triangles, circles and squares]
- Pictures from magazines
- People pictures
- Coloured tissue paper to tear and glue
- Coloured Cellophane to tear and glue
- Fabric pieces, lace, ribbon, string
- Curly wood shavings
- Seeds
- Stamps [used postage stamps on black card]
- Pattycases, popsticks, matchsticks ..coloured or plain
- Coloured Pasta...warm or cold. If warm you don't need glue, the starch in the pasta acts as its own glue-place 1 strand at a time.
- Confetti, glitter (large pieces so chn don't rub it in their eyes)
- Mini streamers from party poppers
- Little 6cm square folded cards.. make an open and shut collage

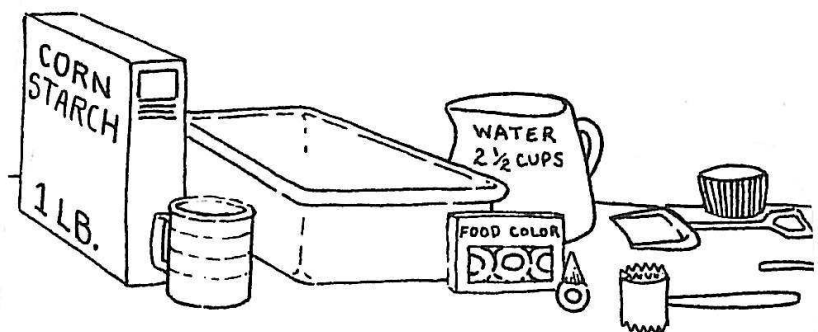
- For special gifts or cards, give child a wide cardbd border with a square cut out in the centre, glued onto a backing card. Child can fill the centre of the frame with eg. Little shells, silk flower heads, tiny starfish, heart shapes or large sequins. Gives the child a sense of filling a space.

ODDS AND ENDS COLLAGE

This activity offers a sense of "sculpture" and 3 dimensional work

- Use all kinds and sizes of boxes
- Empty cardbd cylinders
- Egg cartons
- Empty matchboxes
- Corks
- Plastic bottle tops
- Orange-bag "Mesh"
- Paper plates
- Pattycases, foil tart cases
- Stickers and stars
- Chunks of Styrofoam
- As well as glue, provide wide masking tape
- Shapes cut from kitchen sponges
- Old cotton reels
- Glue things that hang vertically from a long cardbd cylinder eg. Strips of crepe paper, foil, thick coloured wool, tinsel etc.

DECORATE YOUR CREATION WITH PAINT , BRIGHT FEATHERS, CREPE STREAMERS OR COLOURED COTTONWOOL BALLS- IF YOU WISH!



Paint!

Use non-toxic paints and always provide young children with strong colours..red, yellow, blue, green, black, to start with. Add purple, orange, aqua and brown later. Do not mix pale pastel colours for the children, let the clear strong colour make an impact on the white paper.

You can make strong vibrant colours by adding food colouring or Edicol dye to cornflour glue.

Always use BIG painting paper... 'cause young chn make large movements with the brush and little bits of paper are frustrating.

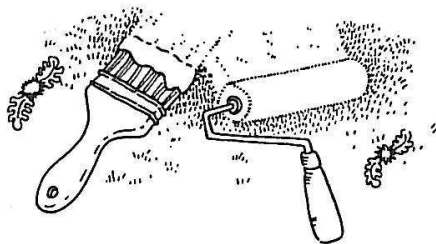
Use butcher's paper or buy bulk paper from Kgn suppliers...eg. Kesco. [Look up the phone book]

With toddlers use short thick brushes, whilst 4's and 5's can move to longer brush shapes.

Write the child's name on the painting with a crayon or texta and ask older chn to tell you about their painting. Write down what they say, at the bottom of the painting. Sometimes write the date of the painting. Hang on the fence or a drying frame to dry. Don't be distressed when a child creates a lovely piece of art then messes it up with paint all over it...after all, it's his work to do whatever he likes! The value was in the doing!

Have painting smocks or aprons near to the paint scene and a damp cloth to wipe spills.

It's good to paint on an easel, but as chn grow older, it's also good to paint on a low table or on the floor...gives a different perspective to the task!

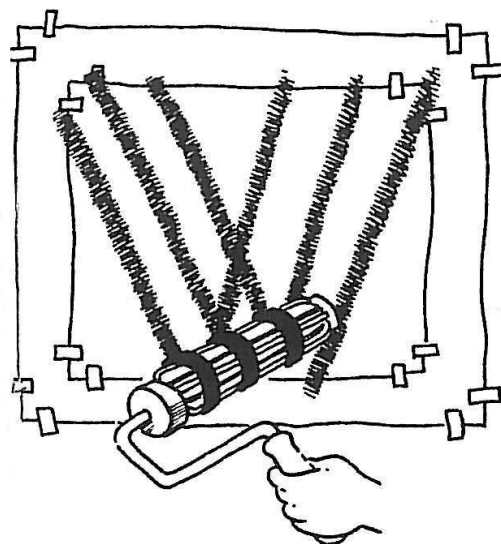


Paint with:

- Brushes...different sizes and thicknesses
- Sponge bits, held in a peg
- Little paint rollers
- Dishmops!
- Wide craft foam sponges
- Big Feathers
- Fingers...1 finger in the paint

Paint on different surfaces:

- White paper
- White paint on black paper (older chn)
- On a large mirror
- On a window or glass door
- On shape paper eg circle [older chn]
- On fabric...paint prints of hands and feet on calico
- Black and red paint on newspaper
- Group murals, starting in the centre of a large sheet and moving outwards.
- Collage Paintings...paint on a table, add glue to your paint today
Chn paint then add confetti, glitter, cottonwool or streamers if they wish.



CHILD CENTRED PAINTING

Child lies on piece of paper, mother draws around him, child paints in the shape (approximately!)

Lipstick on lips. Make Kiss-prints all over a page! Or on a mirror!

Walk on a paint soaked sponge then walk on a long strip of paper... 'One day Johnnie went for a walk etc.' Fill a big piece of paper with hand prints...yours and Mummy's ..who has the biggest hands?

Remember that you can paint with water too! Little buckets of water and wide brushes are great to use on a sunny day...go and paint the climbing frame, the windows and the doors. Explain that this is a good task for we are cleaning as we go.

Occasionally let chn paint on the windows...add some edicol to the paint for brightness. This is a fabulous experience and great to do the week you are having a Visitor's Day. The chn love to see their pictures from inside and outside. Wash off after a week or so and leave the windows sparkling.

Another great idea is to let the chn paint on an old double sheet, mixing handprints with pictures. Add the childrens' names. Use it as...a tablecloth, a sheet to sit on for story time, or a sail for the play boat or a cubby cover to use on a rainy day or when having a picnic outside!

PAINT AND PATTERNS

You need some shallow rectangular trays (like Kitty litter trays!!) Place an A4 sheet of paper in the bottom of the tray. Have some pingpong balls or very large marbles in containers of paint. Spoon a ball out and drop it into the rectangular container. Let child tip and shake the container as the ball rolls all over the paper making patterns as it rolls; add a new ball with another colour...lots of fun!



SPATTERWORK

Place a frame of wire mesh over a shape on white paper. Dip a nail scrubbing brush into paint and scrub all over the mesh. Remove and lift up the shape to see its silhouette [Ask a dad to make the frames for you.]

PAINT AND PRINTS

Cut tennis balls exactly in half (electric knife)

Place half the ball on a paint-soaked sponge then stamp onto paper to make circles. Stick a skewer in the ball to make it easier to hold.

Short lengths of thick dowel, press the ends onto a paint sponge and then stamp onto paper.

Cut a pear or an apple exactly in half, add a cocktail fork to hold onto and stamp fruit patterns.

Older chn can paint over a REAL large fish-from the fish shop!! Then press paper over the top and peel off to see the fish print!

Paint the back of large leaves and then place paper over the top and roll a rolling pin over it...see the veins and shape of the leaf!

BUTTERFLY BLOBS

Fold paper in half, let child place small blobs of bright coloured paint on the paper, fold over, child presses paper, rubbing firmly, Open up and see the butterfly pattern

Finger Painting

Make a mixture of cornflour glue and whilst warm, stir in some lux soap flakes and a teaspoon of Dettol (keeps longer)

Add Edicol or food colouring.

THE SURFACE

The best surface for fingerpainting is a white board...Laminex or Formica or timber covered in dull white contact. This is very satisfying for the child to work on. He can constantly change his patterns (whereas if you fingerpaint straight onto paper, it becomes soggy and wrinkles)

When he is finished, place a large sheet of paper on top of his paint and press firmly to make a "print" (it also dries a lot quicker than paint straight on paper)

At first just use one colour, then offer the option of having some BLUE and YELLOW paint together...Watch as the child mixes the two colours and discovers he is making a new colour! Wonderful! Also use, red and blue or pink and blue, red and yellow.

Older chn can use a comb to drag across the paint and make patterns

It's sometimes good to play some music with a strong beat as the chn are fingerpainting, watch and see if the musical beat influences the pattern the chn are making!

Draw!

The most satisfying equipment for toddlers to draw with are large chunky crayons that are easy to grasp. Keep pencils and textas for 3's and 4's [but keep using crayons with this age too.]

Young children's hand/eye co-ordination develops slowly, starting with big wide circular movements. This "scribble" stage is very important...so always have a low table where toddlers can make scribble drawings. Provide BIG pieces of paper.

Older chn can draw with a white crayon or candle, pressing firmly, then brush over the drawing with water to which food colouring has been added...voila! A magic pattern appears!

Let chn draw with black crayon, then paint over their picture with a variety of food colourings in water...gives a pastel watercolour effect.

4's and 5's can cover a page with thick coloured crayon scribble, then paint blackpaint over the top. When dry, use a plastic knife or skewer to scratch a picture on top of the black paint...see the colours appear.

FRAME the paper...simply draw a border or frame on the drawing paper and see how this influences what the child will draw!

DRAW WITH CHALK

Use big chunky chalks. A blackboard on an easel is useful or flat boards painted with "black/green board paint" can be used on the floor or on a table.

Try drawing with wet chalk or with dry chalk on a wet board.

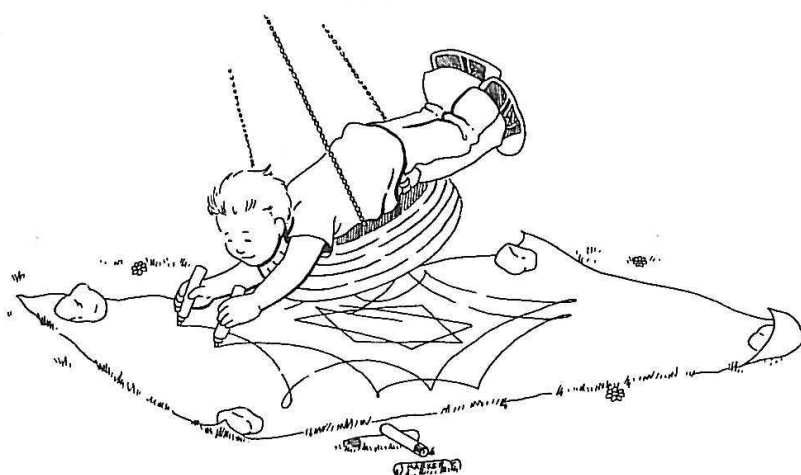
Draw with chalk on black cardboard

"DRAW" WITH GLUE .

Place thin PVA non-toxic glue in a Tomato sauce plastic squirting bottle ...child drizzles glue in a picture or pattern then sprinkles coloured sand over the top. Shake off excess and watch the colour emerge in the sand. [Coloured sand is made by mixing sand and Edicol powder]

TRANSPARENT DRAWINGS

Try giving child some coloured spirit textas and let him draw on an overhead transparency, then tape his art to the window and let the sun shine through it!



Waterworks!

Water is a wonderful learning medium for children. They can discover a huge amount of knowledge from some time spent in water play.

Invest in a water trough or use a large shallow container. Fill with water and play with...thick plastic tubing to watch water run through it (colour water to make it easier to see) Add a plastic "waterwheel", some clear plastic measuring jugs, plastic funnels, a sieve, some corks to float, toy boats , some pebbles to sink etc.

SPRAY BOTTLES

(Always supervise)

Place coloured water [strong colour] into plastic spray bottles. Let chn squirt water onto paper towel...watch the colours run and merge.

Hang out an old white sheet on the fence and let chn completely it with spray colours...Start at the top and work down. When dry use it as a sail for the boat or for a cubby cover.

Bubble Prints

With older chn place coloured water + some detergent in a shallow plastic container.

Demonstrate that we BLOW through a straw (don't suck) into the mixture...and a huge pile of coloured bubbles will rise up. Then place a sheet of white paper on top of the bubbles and let it settle= a bubble print! Use to make a card - very pretty.

BLOW BUBBLES

A mixture of detergent+ water or add some glycerine. Use Plastic bubble blowers, or large curtain rings. Watch the bubbles float and burst! Can you see a rainbow in a bubble? Are bubbles heavy or light? Use the activity for some language work.

BLOW PATTERNS

Place blobs of foodcolouring mixed with water over a white page. Older chn can blow hard through a drinking straw, holding the end close to the colour...watch the colours run like spiders all over the page.

WASHING DAY

Provide warm water with Lux flakes in it and let chn "wash" some doll's clothes or fabric, wring it out and peg it on a line to dry.

SPLASH PAINTINGS

Put dishmops into coloured water and stand back and flick/shake them at paper to make Splash Paintings. Always supervise so that chn know not to flick paint at other people.



Nature!

Experience Nature as you create. We have a great opportunity to develop a sense of wonder and awe at God's Creation, as we work with children.

NATURE PRINTS

Paint the back of leaves and make a print.

Paint pine cones and roll in glitter.

Paint pine cones with honey and roll in birdseed...hang in a tree for the birds...wonderfully messy!

Glue coloured feathers to make a feather collage or an Indian Feather Headband.

Create with sand coloured with Edicol powder..paint a paper plate with glue then sprinkle with sand and watch the colour emerge.

Set out a low tray or window frame and fill with sand. Add a little rake and let chn create patterns in the sand. Add some smooth pebbles and let chn create patterns in the sand/

TREES

Create your own from a wigwam of tall twigs tied together. Let chn decorate with...coloured wool, fibre, bark, leaves, feathers, tinsel, etc.

Decorate the tree in the church grounds....Mums can lift chn up or hold them on a ladder as they add streamers or stars or tinsel to a tree. Stand back and look at your work!

Decorate trees with shiny things, with food for birds, etc.

Remove after a while so that the tree doesn't look sad.

THE SANDPIT

Always keep the sand topped up with fresh sand. Keep covered with a groundsheet when not in use. The sandpit is a wonderful; place for chn to learn. It's also a place to go when you want to just be in your own world for a while!

Add:

Plastic buckets, spades, rakes, jugs, jelly moulds, toys, road signs, sand/water wheels, wild animals and farm animals, little flags (for castles)...don't put everything out every day...vary the selection and watch how the chn play. Always have a mum near the sandpit so chn are supervised.

Take photos of creations before they are demolished!

TENTS

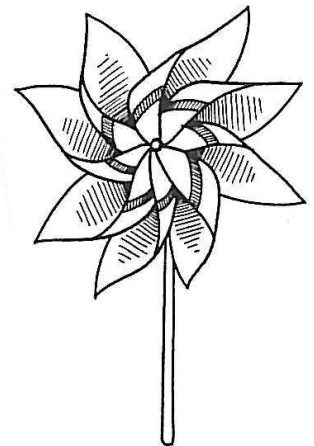
Sometimes put up a tent for chn to play in. This creates a great "Cubby". Have several tents so everyone can play.

WIND

Make windmills to run with [simple ones on a plastic balloon stick are good.] Make large coloured windmills and put on the fence for chn to watch them move.

Make simple paper kites for chn to run with in the wind.

Make paper planes for chn to throw and watch them fly.



Use parachute (tracksuit) fabric to make windsocks to hang in the trees.

Let chn glue coloured Crepe Paper streamers or ribbons to the end of a long cardboard cylinder and then run with them in the wind. (add some large jingle bells to make a sound)

Create windchimes, with metal objects and foil tart cases etc.

Some times just sit outside with the children and watch the wind...can you SEE the wind? Or can you see what it is blowing?

SKY

Go out side and lie down on your back with the chn and look up at the clouds. Then have white paint on blur cardboard for chn to create some clouds...add cotton wool

EARTH

Create a garden bed and let chn dig and plant (or a window box)

Be careful not to use potting mix with little children.

"Plant" a bean seed in the side of a clear plastic cup. Add earth or wet cotton wool and watch the seed grow over a few weeks.

Worm or ant farms are fascinating for chn to look at.

A Nature table that changes each week is a great learning spot..it could have pumpkins..whole and cut, or seed pods, or peas to shell with Mummy, or a fish tank, or a mouse house, or a birdbe creative!

Touch!

Creating with your hands using sculpture materials is important for children and creates a greater awareness of their hands.

CLAY...use air dried clay...avail from craft shops or potteries. Have smocks to wear and buckets of warm soapy water and old towels nearby. Have a paper plate or square of board for chn to put their finished work on.

Work the clay till it is soft, for small chn, let older chn do that themselves.

Add popsticks, toothpicks, feathers, matchsticks for chn to use. Never presume to know what they have created ALWAYS SAY "THAT LOOKS INTERESTING...TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT!"

PLAYDOUGH

Should be FRESH every day!!!!

You can add a sprinkle of glitter on top and let chn work it through the dough.

Have rolling pins and biscuit shapes etc for chn to use. Keep some cornflour in the cupboard in case dough becomes too sticky.

TEXTURE

Provide lots of opportunities for children to touch and feel and experience different textures

Let babies hold an egg (plastic!) which is a first experience of something without end (Eternity?)

Babies can enjoy a large pompom or soft ball too.

Older chn can create with cottonwool, wadding, sponge, vinyl, foil, sandpaper, pebbles, feathers etc.

Rub crayons over paper on top of sandpaper or on top of 50c coins

Play with squeezezy balls...fill balloons[with top cut off] with rice, flour or sand, then insert into another balloon.

Place snippets of coloured cellophane on an OHP and turn on ...let chn see the colours on the wall or screen, move them around to make new pictures.

Let chn sticky tape pieces of cellophane onto the window, watch the sun make coloured reflections on the floor.

CARPENTRY

SUPERVISE!...great if you have a dad or grandpa along. For older chn- Use soft wood offcuts (ask the local timber mill or hardware store), use light hammers, use nails with large flat heads...add bottle tops, foam shapes, Styrofoam chunks etc.

THREAD

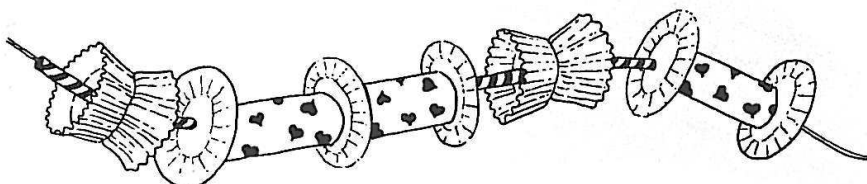
Sticky tape end of wool or cord to make it stiff for threading.

Froot Loops, cheezels

Plastic milk tops (punch holes), Styrofoam bits, Drinking straws or plastic tubing cut into 3cm lengths, macaroni, pasta

Paint large chunks of Styrofoam in fluro colours, then thread onto long string and hang vertically in the wind.

TWIST Crepe paper, thick wool in different colours, raffia



More ideas

SORT

Sorting is a special skill that is a precursor to putting things into "sets" in Mathematics.

You need containers or a divided tray for chn to sort into

SORT by TYPE... from a pile of shells, flowers, leaves and pebbles

SORT by COLOUR... from a pile of drinking straws in 4 different colours or use coloured plastic pegs

SORT by SHAPE... Cut triangles, circles, squares and rectangles from Foamie material (all the same colour) Let chn sort the shapes.

4's and 5's can start to **SORT by SIZING**-5 things the same but going from smallest to biggest.

PATTERN

Free patterns...glue and paper and coloured shapes

Draw up paper into 8 even squares ..see how chn glue shapes on the page

Give older chn paper with a row of lines drawn on it ...use stickers to make a pattern along the line...stick on first 3 then see what chn do.

SMELL...provide opportunities to smell ...flowers, perfume, vegemite, nutmeg, strawberries, vanilla, chocolate etc.

PAPER PLATES

Create Mobiles

3-D scenes-cut centre from 1 plate and staple front to front with another plate, make a scene inside then cover with cello. Make animal masks, make wheels on "boxcars", make steering wheels.

At Christmas time make door wreaths.

Make "Pockets"-staple $\frac{1}{2}$ plate front to front on the bottom of another plate.

Make bird feeders by threading string up through a plate, then through a toilet roll, then through a smaller plate on the top. Add some birdseed stuck on with honey to both plates and hang in a tree.

MUSIC

Developing listening skills is really important.

Make shakers...plastic bottles and rice or sand or dried peas (all make different sounds)

Make bangers-wooden dowel sticks on icecream containers with lids

Tappers...2 thick dowel sticks

Large (non-swallowable) jingle bells to wear on wrists or ankles as you move.

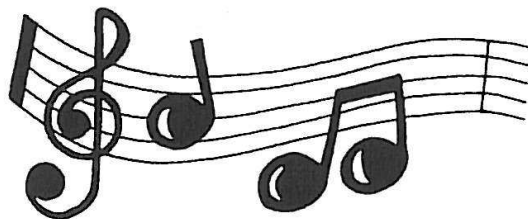
Zylophones for chn to play

THE PIANO WORKS!

Perhaps you could open the front of the piano one day and let the chn see how it works when you play it!

Percussion instruments are a great asset to buy for your group

Play along to dance CD's with a strong beat.



FOOD

Let chn have a turn with an eggbeater and watch egg whites turn fluffy!

Shell peas with Mummy! (new experience)

Make some bread dough and form into rolls, bake in oven
...Mmmmm! Make a gingerbread man.

Stir...chocolate crackle mix and help spoon into pattycakes

Toast...and bread let chn spread their own margarine and vegemite(many chn have never done this)

Cut a whole cabbage in half and let chn look at the rows and patterns of leaves.

Cut wedges of watermelon and let chn remove the seeds.

RAINY DAY SURVIVAL KIT!

Cut out umbrella shapes for chn to glue onto paper, draw handle, and flick blue paint over.

Make gumboot prints...walk on painted sponge then on paper. Then let child scrub the paint off the bottom of his boots.

Make safe cubbies inside for chn to play in.

Add some exciting things to the dress-up corner today

Set up some special book tables for chn to look at books



Cut some circles from coloured contact and place on the floor for chn to step or hop on.

Set up a Gift Wrapping table...boxes, paper, tape,etc, Chn LOVE wrapping things

Children make a drawing and put in an envelope with the child's name and address on. Child adds the stamp..Post it today!

Sing Rainy day songs and thank God for the rain.

SPECIAL SEASONS

At Christmas, decorate with tinsel...on the windows, on the building blocks, on the fences, in the sandpit! Add stars to the windows and the trees.

Winter- snowflakes, a snowman on the window or door.

Summer- sun shapes, yellow streamers, fish and waves on the windows

Autumn- coloured leaves hung from the ceiling or on the windows

Spring-flower shapes, birds, bees and butterflies

Mother's Day- hearts

Father's Day- football shapes and colours

Easter - egg shapes

Displays

From the ceiling- hang branches to hang craft or use fishing line

Make colourful banners to pin art work on..or use plain calico.

Black fabric shows off colourful artwork really well.

Use coloured poster paper (avail Kgn Suppliers or Shop Display) as a backing paper to brighten up your walls.

Make a Welcome sign for your door.

Place some wall decorations at CHILD HEIGHT!