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Mobiles

Almost anything can be hung on a mobile. The frame could be made of an old coat hanger, two sticks crossed and bound together with string or a ring of card. Try making a group mobile with each member of the group drawing a picture of themselves or something that they like, or make a mobile with a particular theme such as the environment or recycling. You could even make a mobile to display things that have been collected on a hike

Calendars

Small calendar tags can be bought from most stationary shops, these can be glued to paintings, collages or models to create a simple calendar.

If you have access to a computer you could print a calendar in the centre of a page and add a decorative border. The advantage of this is that you can start the calendar at whichever month you choose.

Painted tins

Small tins with lids can be used for storing small items or empty bean tins used as pen pots. First make sure there are no sharp edges, rub the tin with wire wool to give a key for the paint. Enamel paints are available from craft and DIY shops. Use a couple of coats as a base then paint your design on top.

Picture frames

Small round pictures look good mounted in the plastic lids from old cocoa or gravy mix tins. Sewn pictures look very effective if some wadding is glued in behind the picture. If you make a hole in the edge of the lid and thread wool through you can hide the ends behind the picture and hang your frame up.

Snow Flakes

Fold a square of paper into quarters then into a triangle then cut small shapes out of the edges. Unfold to reveal the snowflake. You could also use a circle of paper folded into 6 and cut away a V from the curved edge. These can be used as stencils for painting.

Egg Box Flowers

Cut out a section from an egg box and paint it. Cut petal shapes round the sides making sure that the petals stay attached to the base. Use a green pipe cleaner for a stem and add leaves cut from green paper. To make daffodils and a trumpet made from orange paper. Plant the flowers in a pot of sand.

Painting

Bubble printing

Either powder paints or ready mixed ones can be used for this although ready mixed paint may need to be diluted. Add a small amount of washing up liquid to the paint, pour into a shallow dish and use a straw to blow bubbles. Once the bubbles are above the edge of the dish lay a piece of paper over the top.

Blow painting

Put a blob of runny paint onto the paper and blow to spread it. You will be able to aim more easily if you blow through a straw.

Scented paintings

Mix spices into the paints to give them different smells.

Spray painting 1

Cut out shapes from paper and using blu-tack stick them onto a second sheet of paper. Now flick paint off an old toothbrush to create a spray effect. When the paint is dry remove the shapes.

Spray painting 2

This works best for creating large pictures and should be done outdoors. Mask off areas of the paper by blu-tacking on paper shapes as above. If possible hang the paper vertically. Now using plant mister bottles spray over the shapes. The paint has to be quite thin.

String pictures

Dip a length of string in some paint. Fold a piece of paper in half and open it out again, now arrange the string on one half of the paper with the end just off the bottom. Fold the paper over again and pull the string out holding the top half of the paper down gently.

Wax resist pictures

Draw a picture or write a message on a piece of white paper using a white wax crayon or a candle. Paint over using thin paint to see the picture.

Once the children have drawn their pictures they could swap with another member of the group and try to guess what they have drawn before painting to find out.

Printing

Various objects can be used for printing, try using old cotton reels cardboard tubes, sponges, blocks of wood, leaves as well as hands and feet.

You can make your own printing blocks by gluing string or thin sponge onto blocks of wood, cutting shapes out of sponge (washing up sponges are good as the scouring pad helps it to keep the shape) cutting sections out of a polystyrene tile and of course cutting shapes out of potatoes.

You can either put paint in shallow dishes or use a brush to paint in onto the objects. If you use fabric paint you could print a T-shirt.

Finger Painting

Colour a flour and water paste with paint. You can either paint directly onto paper or spread paint onto a wipe clean surface as a table top or baking sheet) then take a print by laying a sheet of paper on top.

Toys and Games

Feely boxes

Cut a hole in the side of a large cardboard box, gluing the sleeve of an old shirt to it will stop children peeking. Place an object under the box and try to guess what it is.

Snap/Pairs cards

Give each person two pieces of card on which they should draw two identical pictures. Use the cards to play snap or pairs. You could use these to divide the group into pairs, each person picking a card and finding the matching one.

For older children get them all to draw similar pictures e.g. Christmas trees. Label one of each pair with a letter and the other with a number. Place the cards randomly around the room. Each person gets a piece of paper and tries to match the cards i.e. A and 5, b and 3 etc.

Whizzers

Cut out a circle of card about 6-8 cm across. You will need to use fairly stiff card or you could old cereal boxes and glue two circles together. This also makes it easier to cut out. Decorate both sides of the circle with felt pens

Make two holes about 1 cm apart in the centre of the circle. The easiest way to do this is to have a paper circle the same size. This can be folded to find the centre Using a sharp implement and pliers make the holes. Thread a length of wool through the holes and tie the ends together to make a loop. Hold one end of the loop in each hand with the circle in the centre Twirl to twist the wool then pull your hands apart to see it whiz.

It is safer to use wool rather than string as this will break easily if it gets caught without hurting the child.

Dressing Up

Masks

Cut out the shape from thin card, decorate with paints scraps or simply felt pens. Attach elastic to hold in place.

Pasta jewellery

Colour pasta tubes or shapes with felt pens and thread then onto elastic.

Bead Making

Cover a pencil, knitting needle or similar object with a thin layer of Vaseline. Cut coloured paper into strips about 1 cm wide. Cover the back in glue and wind it round the pencil. You will need to

start at an angle and make sure that you don't leave any gaps. Slide the paper off the pencil and leave to dry. You can then snip it into beads which can be threaded into jewellery.

Puppets and Characters

Peg dolls

Use the old style wooden pegs (the ones without a spring) draw a face with felt tips and dress with scraps of fabric.

Toilet roll characters.

Using scraps of paper and fabric decorate a toilet roll middle and make into a person or animal. You could use them as finger puppets.

Faces

Make a face using paper plates or circles of paper. Each person could make themselves then the faces could be stuck on a group banner.

Finger puppets

Cut two U shapes pieces of felt about 4 cm wider and 2 higher than your finger. Sew or glue round the edges and decorate.

Finger mice

Glue a semicircle of card into a cone, add a tail and some ears to complete your mouse.

Egg Box Spiders

Cut one section from an egg box and paint it black. Make eight small hole round the open edge using a sharp pencil. Cut four black pipe cleaners in half, (white ones can be coloured with felt tips) and thread through the holes to make the legs. Fold over the ends of the pipe cleaners so they do not fall out. You could make a small hole in the top the spider and thread some elastic through o hang it up.

You could use the same technique to make caterpillars. Put two legs onto each section of egg box then join them together with small lengths of pipe cleaner. You could hang this from two points or use plastercine to hold two sticks into the head and tail sections to make a puppet.

Sock puppets

The sock is placed over the hand with the heel over the knuckles, the toe of the sock is then tucked in-between the thumb and fingers to create a mouth. Add features with scraps of fabric, wool or coloured paper.

Pictures and Hangings

Foil rubbings

Cut out the foil from the bottom of a pie dish, be careful as the edges may be sharp. Now using a blunt pencil draw a pattern. Press hard enough to create an impression but not to cut through the foil. Now turn the foil over and place a piece of paper on top. Rub gently with a crayon to reveal the

pattern. Some pie dishes have patterns stamped into them which you could use.

Transfer pictures

Take a piece of thin paper and colour with wax crayon making sure the whole area is covered. Now place this crayon side down onto a second piece of paper and draw a design on the top using a blunt pencil. Remove the top paper to reveal the pattern. You can use the crayoned paper to make several pictures.

Egg Shell Mosaics

Use PVA glue to stick small pieces of egg shell onto stiff paper. You can either make patterns using the different colours of the various eggs or use paint to colour it once the glue has dried. Try drawing a turtle and using the egg shells to create its shell

Under water pictures.

Draw a picture using felt pens. Brush over areas of the picture with water to give a wet effect. You don't have to have the whole of an area filled before you wet it as the colours will spread and mingle.

Food pictures

Cut out pictures of foods from the packaging and stick onto a paper plate or circle of card.

Leaf rubbings

Place a leaf vein up on a smooth surface with a piece of paper on top. Rub lightly over the leaf with a crayon.

You can take rubbings of all sorts of textures. This activity is easy to do outdoors where you could take rubbings of tree bark, fence posts, bricks, stone walls etc.

Sand pictures

Draw a picture using glue then sprinkle on sand. Try writing a letter or word. When dry can you read it by feel?

Button pictures

Create pictures or patterns by sewing different types of buttons onto a square of fabric. Provide coloured wool for sewing in between the buttons.

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