

18 Finger Printing With Sponges

18

Originating ideas

At work time, instead of using paper and easels, children have been using paint and paintbrushes to paint on their hands and fingers. Once their hands are covered with paint, they use them to make imprints on paper.

Curriculum content areas

Science and technology — Classification: *Distinguishing between “some” and “all”*

The arts — Visual art: *Relating models, pictures, and photographs to real places and things*

Materials

- ☆ Thin sponges on paper plates and sheets of construction paper for each child
- ☆ Tempera paint
- ☆ Newspaper to cover the painting surface
- ☆ For backup: an assortment of objects that children can use for paint printing (hair curlers, corks, plastic forks, and Bristle Blocks)

Beginning

With children’s help, spread newspaper over the painting surface. Give each child a piece of construction paper and a paper plate with a sponge on it. As children watch, or with their help, pour tempera paint directly onto children’s sponges. Wait a moment, and watch as the paint soaks in. Say “I wonder what would happen if you touched the sponge with your finger and then put your finger on the paper?”

Middle

Listen to and support children’s observations and activities. If they mention the way the paint is soaking into the sponge, crouch and look closely at the sponge. If they’ve made fingerprints on their piece of paper and they

notice the swirls in them, look at the fingerprints with them. Then show them your own fingerprint swirls as a way of highlighting similarities and differences. To encourage them to try printing with other materials, make up a guessing game with them (“I notice the curler is on the paper. If you close your eyes, I’ll paint with something. See if you can guess what it is”).

End

Write children’s names and symbols on their paintings, and ask them to store them in your drying area. Have soapy sponges available for cleaning the tables, and encourage children to help wipe tables and stuff the paint-soaked newspaper into the trash can. Help children clean themselves, making yourself available as they wash themselves off to talk about the changes they notice in their hands and the colors of the water.

Follow-up

1. Repeat this activity outdoors on a warm day. This time, encourage children to paint and print with their bare feet.
2. Store three paper plate/sponge sets in a plastic bin in the art area to provide another painting option at work time.



This child's interest in painting on her hands, then printing with them on the easel paper, gave teachers the idea for a small-group time that encouraged similar hand-printing activities.

New Materials

Small-Group Activity

19 Autumn Tree Treasures

19

Originating ideas

On a recent neighborhood walk children collected acorns, acorn tops, and horse chestnuts, with and without their cases. Before adding these materials to the classroom areas, teaching staff decided to use them in a small-group setting.

Curriculum content areas

Mathematics — Number: *Arranging two sets of objects in one-to-one correspondence*

Science and technology — Classification: *Recognizing objects by sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell; exploring and describing similarities, differences, and the attributes of things; and sorting and matching*

Materials

- ☆ A **shoe box** filled with **acorns** and **horse chestnuts** (Leave the top on and cut out a hole in the side big enough for a child's hand to fit through.)
- ☆ A small **bag** filled with **acorns** and **horse chestnuts** for each child (Make sure that some of the acorns still have their tops attached and that some of the horse chestnuts are still inside their cases.)
- ☆ **Magnifying glasses**
- ☆ For backup: **stones** and **pebbles**

Beginning

Set out the specially prepared shoe box. Have children in your group take turns putting their hands inside to feel the contents and then describe and make guesses about what is inside. To encourage them to elaborate on their descriptions, make up funny responses based on what they say (“Hmmm, something hard, it must be an elephant toenail”).

Middle

Put the small bags and magnifying glasses on the table, and ask each child to take a bag. To gain information on how children sort materials and describe attributes, watch as children explore the materials inside. Observe to see whether any children put acorn tops on acorns, rub the textured surface of the horse chestnuts, or notice the dark or light markings on either material. Listen to the words they use to describe the spiny casings of the chestnuts (“It’s prickly,” “...like a porcupine,” “Ouch!”). Notice if any children use the materials in role-play situations. Some children may arrange the chestnuts and/or acorns in lines, seriating them by size and labeling them as different family members based on their sizes. If they do, bring your own set of materials to where they are playing, and take on a role that relates to their play (for example, pretend to knock, using your acorn as a pretend person who says, “Hello, visitor for Grandma — Are you home, Grandma?”).

End

As the group comes to an end, put two big containers in the middle of the table. Have children sort the acorns and chestnuts into the two containers. If children mix the two together when cleaning up, make a mental note, but resist the urge to correct them.

Follow-up

1. On the day after the small-group activity, bring a chestnut and an acorn to planning time. Ask the child who is planning to choose one of them to roll into the area he or she plans to work in. Then have the child describe his or her plans.
2. Add separate containers of chestnuts and acorns to the house area, toy area, or sand and water table.

New Materials

Small-Group Activity

20 Pomegranate Explorations

20

New Materials

Originating ideas

At snack time several days before this small-group activity, lots of conversation was generated when kiwi fruit was served. Besides talking about the texture and color of the fruit, children also made comparisons between kiwis and other round fruits like apples and plums, even though apples and plums were not served that day. The teaching team decided to capitalize on children's interest in fruits by bringing in a fruit to explore, one (pomegranates) that would probably be new to most children.

Curriculum content areas

Mathematics — Seriation: *Comparing attributes (longer/shorter, bigger/smaller)*

Mathematics — Number: *Counting objects*

Science and technology — Classification: *Recognizing objects by sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell and exploring and describing similarities, differences, and the attributes of things*

Materials

- ☆ **Pomegranates**, one for every four children to share
- ☆ **Plastic knives** for each child, and a **paring knife** for the adult
- ☆ **White butcher paper** to cover table
- ☆ **Paper towels** and **smocks**
- ☆ For backup: **magnifying glasses**

Beginning

Spread the butcher paper on the table with the help of the children. After the children have put on their smocks, put the pomegranates in the middle of the table. Wait for children's comments and questions.

Middle

After the children have explored the whole fruits, cut the fruits open with the paring knife so the insides are visible. Before you cut open each fruit, ask children to predict what they might see and then wait for their descriptions. Give each child pomegranate sections to explore, using their plastic knives. Help children focus on the similarities of the pomegranates to other fruits they know (for example, apples and pomegranates are red outside and rounded, they both have seeds inside, they both have white inside). Then encourage children to look for the differences between pomegranates and other fruits they know. Notice whether any children line up the seeds from the pomegranate to count them or point out the way the pomegranate juice stains the white butcher paper.

End

With the children, collect leftover pomegranate sections in a bucket in the middle of the table for disposal in your compost bin. Leave the paper out to encourage discussion about the red designs the juices made. Have children wash and dry their hands.

Follow-up

1. If possible, leave the butcher paper on the table for another day as a reminder of the activity.
2. At the next day's planning or recall time, have children place a pomegranate seed on the area symbol card corresponding to their work-time plans or experiences.

Small-Group Activity