

PLANNING FOR A WORKSHOP

Decide on a theme – it can be anything from jungle animals to the weather. Keep it simple so that the boundaries can be stretched. You can never tell how children will react to a theme so you have to allow for changes of plan at the last minute.

RESOURCING THE WORKSHOP

Once the theme has been decided, find as much relevant materials as possible. This can be story books, craft materials, music recordings, musical instruments (handmade ones are always a novelty, especially if the children are allowed to make their own).

BASIC SKILLS

If you have a good theme and a plan for the workshop to follow, the main skill is to encourage the children to enjoy themselves and use their imagination. Be prepared for changes in your plan - you may have thought about doing a song in the middle of the workshop but this may have to be done at the beginning instead. Whatever you had planned for the beginning will therefore maybe have to be slotted in somewhere else in the workshop time.

LINKING ART FORMS TO OTHER ACTIVITIES THROUGH PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Combining a variety of art forms into a workshop will keep the children's interest up. By using visual arts and crafts, music, song and drama, the children are learning to link movement, sound, colour, etc together and have to be more aware of all their senses. It also allows them to use their creativity in different ways.

DEMONSTRATING TECHNIQUES AND HOW THEY CAN BE USED

For a music workshop you can let the children make their own instruments. This can be done by any age and gives the child a sense of achievement. It lets them show you and others what they are capable of making and lets them explore different sounds and work out how to use sound to emphasise mood, movement, etc.

For art it is about experimentation, encouraging children to try out different techniques, explore different materials, and use their imaginations to combine ideas and techniques shown to them to produce their own original piece of art. Anything can be implemented, from simply collaging pieces of different papers, to trying various effects out in paint: the aim is to be creative and fun.

BUILDING WORKING RELATIONSHIPS AND CONFIDENCE IN PARTICIPANTS AND OTHER STAFF

By using a variety of art forms, everyone is given the chance to use the skills that they have. The children gain confidence by discovering that they can express themselves in a way which best suits them and by learning how to use their imagination.

VISUAL ARTS FOR CHILDREN :-

The main reason for working with children using visual arts is for the children themselves to explore their own imaginations and creativity.

A good idea is to use themes – for example nursery rhymes, animals, seasons or special occasions. The visual arts also link in easily with other mediums like music, dance, drama and story-telling, all adding to the learning experience of the child.

With visual arts children can experiment with many media, gain confidence in their own abilities and learn not to be afraid of trying new things. Any mark on a piece of paper can be a major achievement for a young person, and great satisfaction can be gained from creating something wonderful on their own.

The visual arts, in whichever form they take, are about creativity, imagination, exploration and fun!

TIPS FOR CHILDCARERS

For working with children through the medium of collage, no special skills are needed. The most important thing is to spend time thinking of and finding exciting, interesting materials to use. Almost anything can be used, from different papers, pieces of textile, wool, different plastics, shells, leaves, flowers, flotsam and jetsam, pasta and seeds, the list is endless.

Another thing is not to be wary of working on a larger scale than normal. Many child workers tend to stick to A4, but giving a child a piece of A3 or even A2 paper can open up a whole new world of experimentation. Children should also be encouraged to try out their own ideas, keeping adult intervention to a minimum, and being as unobtrusive as possible, letting children use and explore their own creativity.

Other media can be used along with the collage idea. Drawings and painting in amongst the materials being stuck down with glue can give wonderful, exciting textural pieces, which are as tempting to touch as to look at.

Lastly, if attempting collage with children, do expect mess!