Block Painting

To prepare, gather a variety of blocks and place each one near a shallow pan of paint. (Consider using interlocking blocks as well as plain wooden blocks.) Press a block in the paint and then on the paper as desired. Continue in the same way to make a lovely printed masterpiece!

Michelle Espelien
Community Christian Preschool
Poway, CA

Splat!

This mess-free hammer painting is terrific for hand-eye coordination! To make one, place dollops of paint on a sheet of construction paper and then slide the paper into an oversize resealable plastic bag. (Two-gallon bags are great for this project!) Seal the bag and then hit the dollops of paint with a play hammer until a desired effect is achieved. How cute!

Noel James
Greater Wenatchee Parent-Child Preschool
Wenatchee, WA
“Whoooo” Are My Helpers?

Make a simple branch cutout from bulletin board paper and attach it to a wall. Write job titles on the branch and title the display as shown. Then have each child color a cutout copy of the owl on page 70. Write each youngster’s name on his owl. To assign each job, attach a different owl above each job title. Adorable!

Amy Jandebeur, Frogs to Fairy Dust, Yukon, OK

To make this adorable and easy-to-prepare display, take a photo of each child. Then have him attach his photo to a CD. Use a permanent marker to write each child’s name on his CD. Then display the CDs with the title shown and a sassy border. (The title is sure to make classroom visitors smile!)

Denise Manly
Ottawa County Early Childhood Center
Oak Harbor, OH
**A Pumpkin’s Life**

Encourage little ones to act out the life cycle of a pumpkin! Encourage them to curl up like little seeds, sprout and wiggle like growing vines, move their arms like blooming blossoms, form little balls like small pumpkins, and then get big and round like full-grown pumpkins. What an excellent no-prep gross-motor activity!

Adapted from an idea by Marielle Lopez
Makalapa Elementary
Honolulu, HI

**Fall Colors**

Explain to students that people think of certain colors when they think of fall. Have students brainstorm fall colors; write the colors on your board. Then choose a color and have students name other objects that are that color. For example, red is a fall color, and strawberries, fire engines, and apples are also red!

**Ring Around the Pumpkins**

Gather youngsters in a circle around a few pumpkins and lead them in performing this twist on “Ring Around the Rosie”!

Ring around the pumpkins,  
A pocket full of candy,  
Trick-or-treat!  
Trick-or-treat!  
We all say, “Boo!”

Hold hands and circle to the right.  
Circle to the left.  
Drop hands and shake hips.  
Shake hips.  
Cup hands over mouth.

Chris Pipenger  
Valley Forge Elementary  
Huber Heights, OH

**What Do You See?**

Attach a squirrel cutout to a sheet of chart paper. Say, “Brown squirrel, brown squirrel, what do you [see]?” Have students name things the squirrel might see in the fall; write the words on the chart paper. Continue with other senses.

**Spider Sing!**

Place a few spider cards in a deck of letter, number, or shape cards. Have the class name the symbols on the cards. When you come to a spider card, prompt youngsters to sing “The Itsy-Bitsy Spider.” Continue the activity, encouraging students to sing the song faster for each subsequent spider card encountered. Youngsters will get lots of skill practice, and you’ll hear lots of giggles!

Jennifer Gemar  
Tripp-Delmont Elementary  
Tripp, SD
A Memorable Collection

Here is a keepsake that parents are sure to treasure! I have each child make handprints on a large rectangular shirt box (or cake box). Then I add a heart labeled with the child’s name and school year. I add a photo of the child on the left side of the heart. Throughout the year I invite her to put special art projects in her box. Near the end of the school year, I add a recently taken photo on the right side of the heart. I have each child present her box to her parents at an end-of-the-year celebration. **Katie Symonds, St. Ambrose School, Anderson, IN**

**IF YOU TAKE A PARENT TO SCHOOL...**

During our open house, I have the parents participate in a morning meeting, and I read aloud *If You Take a Mouse to School* by Laura Numeroff. After the read-aloud, I have parents complete a sentence starter like the one shown and illustrate their words as desired. I bind the pages between two covers and read the book aloud to my preschoolers. This is always a popular book in my reading center! **Beth Sharpe, The Malvern School of Medford, Medford, NJ**

**Morning Greetings**

Need another job for your classroom job chart? Try the class greeter! The greeter’s job is to welcome each child and teacher to the room with a good morning and a high five. This is one of my students’ favorite jobs! **Melissa Bates, Lyle School, Kewanee, IL**

“Opening *The Mailbox* magazine and books is like Christmas for me. I can always count on finding fresh twists for teaching traditional concepts.”—**Marcia Snarski Wuest** via Facebook
How do you calm tearful youngsters?

When a youngster’s crying becomes a daily occurrence, I give the little one a small clock to carry around. I gently explain that when the clock hands reach a certain number, it is time to cry. Youngsters love the security of carrying something tangible, and they forget all about crying!

Ronna Adkins, First Baptist Church Day School, Pikeville, KY

I have parents send in family pictures, and I put them in a photo album. I place the album in a corner of the classroom along with a sign labeled “Cozy Corner.” I also place pillows and a couple of snuggly stuffed toys in the area. When little ones are feeling blue, I have them visit the Cozy Corner for a few minutes to hold the stuffed toys and look at the pictures.

Amy Cannon, The Goddard School, Cranberry Township, PA

I have a pretty polished rock that I refer to as my peace stone. When a youngster is crying and distressed, I allow him to hold the stone and turn it over and over in his hands until he feels better. It really is quite soothing!

Donna Olp, St. Gregory the Great Preschool, South Euclid, OH

Research has shown that teachers’ positive interaction styles with children help children build emotionally secure relationships with adults.

M. M. Ostrosky and E. Y. Jung, Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning

To calm little ones who are crying, I turn over a sand timer and lead students in quietly singing this song.

(sung to the tune of “London Bridge”)

Sand is falling, sand is falling.
Tears are done, tears are done.
Sand is falling, sand is falling.
Tears are done.

Doria Owen, William Paca Old Post Road Elementary, Abingdon, MD

It’s your turn! Share your ideas. themailbox.com/submitideas
All Through the Night

What makes noise on a fall night? Youngsters find out with this song! Lead students in singing the song shown. Then continue with other suggested verses.

*(sung to the tune of “The Wheels on the Bus”)*

The wings on the bat go flap, flap, flap, Flap arms.
Flap, flap, flap, flap flap, flap!
The wings on the bat go flap, flap, flap—
All through the night!

*Suggested verses:* The legs on the spider go skitter, skitter, skitter *(wiggle fingers over arm)*; The beak on the owl goes click, click, click *(move hand like a beak)*; The wind through the trees goes groan, groan, groan *(move arms like branches)*; The moon in the sky shines bright, bright, bright *(hold arms to make a circle)*

Annette Payne
Lawrence County Early Childhood Center
South Point, OH

Hungry Pilgrims!

These little Pilgrims are ready for a Thanksgiving Day meal!

Five little Pilgrims were in a grumpy mood. 
The first one said, “I’m ready for some food!”
The second one said, “Some turkey would be nice.”
The third one said, “Or a pumpkin pie slice!”
The fourth one said, “Mashed potatoes, please.”
The fifth one said, “And some nice green peas!”
With a chew and a gulp and a munch, munch, munch, munch, munch,
The five little Pilgrims were a happy bunch!

Kristen Hill
Sea Island Presbyterian Day School
Lady’s Island, SC
This whole-group activity is perfect for reinforcing familiar opposites! To prepare, gather a cup (empty), a cotton ball (soft), a rock (heavy), sandpaper (rough), and a moist sponge (wet). To begin, slowly tip the cup and say, “This [cup] is [empty], so it is not...” pausing and prompting youngsters to say the opposite of empty, full. Continue with the remaining items, replacing the underlined words with an object’s name and the adjective shown in the parentheses.

Suzanne Moore
Tucson, AZ

Engaging in this kinesthetic activity is a sure-fire way to help little ones remember opposite pairs! Arrange youngsters in an open area with plenty of space between them. Then lead students in performing this fun action song.

(sung to the tune of “This Old Man”)

Jump up high,
Squat down low,
Clap really fast, and
Now clap slow.
Take a big step and then
Take a small step too.
I love opposites.
Don’t you?

Suzanne Moore
Picture Cards
Use with “Waffles for Winnie” on page 223.
Safety at Home

Develop your little ones’ safety awareness with this selection of super ideas!

ideas contributed by Roxanne LaBell Dearman
NC Early Intervention Program for Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
Charlotte, NC

Is It Safe or Not?

Participating in a game

Youngsters need their safety awareness thinking caps to play this game! Have children stand side by side and position yourself a short distance from them. Then ask at-home safety questions, like “Is it safe to color at a table?” prompting students to respond “No, it’s not!” or “Yes, it is!” When the correct answer is “yes,” young-sters take a giant step forward. When the correct answer is “no,” they stand still. Continue play until everyone reaches you.

Calling 9-1-1

Recognizing emergency situations

Help students recognize emergency situations and understand when it’s appropriate to call 9-1-1. To begin, ask, “Does anyone know what the word emergency means?” After discussing the concept, explain that 9-1-1 can be called when there is an emergency. Next, lead the group in singing the song shown. Then help a volunteer name a situation in which it’s appropriate to call 9-1-1. Repeat the song and then have another child name a situation. Continue for several rounds. Then follow up the activity by having little ones practice dialing 9-1-1 on a play phone.

(sung to the tune of “Three Blind Mice”)

9-1-1, 9-1-1,
It’s not for fun.
It’s not for fun.
It is for an emergency
If something happens to you or me.
Let’s discuss it so we agree.
9-1-1.
Tent Patterns
Use with “Tent Math” on page 305.
Three fish go splish, splash.

Many teeth go chomp, chomp!