

# ArtExpress

## All Around the Sites

Volume 5

Issue 5

January 2001



leaves began to “fall” as the season progressed.

### Fun with Snow

If the temperature ever gets warm enough for taking children outside to experience all this snow, try taking along small containers of water, colored with food coloring, and eye droppers to make beautiful pictures in the snow. An idea tried in several classrooms is to bring the snow inside in plastic trays or tubs. Some classrooms fill their sensory/sand table with snow. Children can create snow people and snow creatures. Hide small plastic animals under the snow for the children to find. Add small shovels and pails or plastic butter tubs and children can dig and mold shapes. Remember that children’s hands may get cold pretty fast. Invite them to put on their mittens while they continue to play. *The Snowy Day*, by Ezra Jack Keats and *The Mitten* by Jan Brett are wonderful books to read this time of year.



### Classroom Activities

**Shannon Kellogg** (Northwestern ECE Program, Good Hope, Illinois) has been doing some creative problem solving. Her classroom is in the center of the school building with no windows. She moved the housekeeping area under a large bulletin board and hung a curtain with a valance over the top edge of the bulletin board. The bulletin board was covered with construction paper—green, blue, and brown to represent grass, sky, and a tree.

The children decorated green construction paper leaves and placed them on the tree. There were even some birds and squirrels in and around the tree at times. During the fall, a supply of yellow, orange, red, and brown construction paper and scissors were available for the children to cut and add more leaves to their tree. The children began replacing the green leaves on the paper tree with the leaves of fall colors. The colorful

In December, the last of the leaves were removed and the ground was replaced with white construction paper to represent “snow.” Shannon covered the board with clear cellophane paper with small snowflakes printed on it, added white paper strips to depict panes of glass, and strung Christmas lights just before the December break. She says the children love to participate in making the seasons change in their classroom window. Shannon says it’s a good way to display the children’s spontaneous art work and it’s a great bulletin board!

**Sue Craig** (Avon ECE Program, Avon, Illinois) and her children have been spending time learning about making and playing musical instruments. Many instruments were brought in for the children to look at and explore. A student and parent volunteer visited the classroom to play a couple of songs on their trumpets. On another day a teacher played the guitar and violin for the children.

The children also took a tour of the high school band room. The children played musical instruments in the band room and listened to the high school pep band play. The children watched the school band director when he was directing the band. The electric keyboard was an instrument in the band room which the children found most fascinating.

When the children came back to the classroom, some of the children were pretending to be a band director while others played musical instruments. *It was a wonderful sight*, said Sue. Instruments were placed in the dramatic play area, which was now referred to as the “band room.” In the art area, materials were made available for children to make their own musical instruments. The following are some of the instruments the children made:

- **Flutes and Kazoos.** The children made flutes by rolling paper into a small circle and kazoos with small cardboard tubes. They decorated the cardboard tubes with markers, stickers, and crayons. They placed a hole at one end with a paper punch

and covered the end with a piece of wax paper (held in place by a rubber band). The children practiced how to blow gently through the other end. Sue said this is a good skill because many children do not know how to blow “gently.”

- **Tambourines.** They each decorated and stapled together two paper plates to make tambourines. They filled the partially stapled paper plates with rice, seeds, and/or corn and then continued to staple around the edges until it was stapled closed.
- **Rain Sticks.** At the workbench the children made several rain sticks. Use a mailing tube, rice, beans or birdseed, 1 1/2 inch nails, and a hammer. Hammer the nails into the tube, creating patterns all over. Fill the tube with one to two cups of the rice, beans, or birdseed. The more nails used the slower the rice, seeds, or beans will travel when tipped, creating the rain-like sound. Secure the lid with tape. Cover the tube with colored or clear tape to help keep the nails in place.

Note from Sue: Each year parents are giving play money for their participation in activities at school and home. With the play money, the school has an auction twice a year. At the first auction this year two of the rain sticks were auctioned off. They were the hottest item. The class was asked to make more for the next auction in May.

## Painting to Music

Playing music in the classroom can be an enjoyable experience; but it can also be a learning experience too. Children can recognize that various components of music also exist in visual arts. Some musical favorites to play in the classroom include: the music of Enya, Dixieland Jazz, Vivaldi’s “Four Seasons,” the soundtrack to The Titanic, the music of Mozart, or music from Peru.

Rhythm - percussion with bass and drums lays down a repetitive track that pulls the piece together. Visually repetitions of colors, of lines, and other various marks accomplish the same. Invite the children to listen to a favorite tune, like a Celtic song or the song “Smooth” on Santana’s new CD. They then can paint their response in black tempera. During the next art activity time, listen again. Set the mode on the boom box to “repeat,” then discuss color and paint again. Extend this activity by talking about lines as pattern and texture and about how line can also express emotion.

## Child Data

Teachers sending February 2001 child data will be sent packets of forms by the end of January. The child data forms will be due by the end of February.

## Play with Clay

Need help teaching and relating shapes to objects in the children’s environment? Here is a simple activity that involves sculpting, drawing, and shape-making.

**Make a Shape.** Give children a half stick of clay or ball of play dough, a small rolling pin, and a wooden etching tool. As children mush the clay into a ball, talk about the shape of the ball as a circle. Next flatten the ball with the rolling pin to make a circle. It doesn’t have to be perfect, just have fun. Invite the children to take the etching tool and draw a circle in the clay, then carve it out.



Then mush up the clay again and make a rectangle and a triangle. Show the children how they can cut off the end of the rectangle to make a square too. Each time the children make a shape, look for things that shape in the classroom. Children may not remember the name of the “sphere” or a “cylinder” but they will begin to realize that shapes have a name.

**Make an Animal.** When the children finish with the basic shapes, they can roll the clay back into a ball. Talk about spheres and what they see around them that is a sphere. Talk about a cylinder and roll the clay to make a cylinder. Relate the cylinder to objects in the classroom. Ask the children what animal is shaped like a cylinder. The children might say a worm or a snake. Invite them to make one.

**Make a Letter.** When the worm or snake is long enough, show the children how to form a circle with the worm. Identify the circle as an “O.” Cut a chunk out and make a “C.” Invite children to roll the clay to make other letters in the children’s names.

When it is time to move on to other activities, let the children help place the clay, rolling pins, and etching tools in an air tight container or baggie and place it on the art shelf. Many children will revisit this activity during free choice and center times.

## Coming Events

**January 12, 2001** — Carol Schneider will present “Using Technology to Promote Emergent Literacy and Expressive Arts in the Preschool Classroom” at the TAM 2001 Technology Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico.