

STEM in Playgroup

Our EarlyON facilitators put a lot of organization into choosing materials and setting up activities in playgroup. I'm sure you've seen lots of changes this last year as we put "How Does Learning Happen?" into action and we have strived to add lots of natural materials and include nature exploration activities inside and out. Keep an eye out this year for STEM activities!

STEM is an acronym for activities that integrate more than one of these areas: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. Sounds like a pretty lofty idea for infants, toddlers and preschoolers doesn't it? You might be surprised that your young children are already doing this naturally during their play! When a child builds a road using blocks they are using engineering (building/constructing with a purpose), math (measuring, matching), technology (using ramps – a simple machine) and science (exploring the properties of wood).

Why is STEM so important? When children explore these areas while playing, they develop critical thinking skills. They are constantly problem solving, trying different strategies to make things work and just seeing what happens when they try different ways of doing things. Success builds confidence and self-esteem and failure provides exciting learning opportunities as well as a try, try again attitude. These skills ripple across all areas of development. They are skills we need as adults to help us function in our lives. Critical thinking helps us become successful and even helps us find more enjoyment in life.

Watch for some of these stem activities at playgroup. Use the scientific method as you play. Predict, Discover, Discuss!

Ramps and pathways - Roll cars, balls, or marbles down boards, tubes, books, cardboard, all with one side elevated. Can you make them go faster? Can you turn them? Can you jump them into a cup?

Building with paper or plastic cups - How high can you make a tower of cups? Count how many cups you use. Can you make one taller? Shorter? How many different ways can you knock it down? Design a zoo or a garage. What makes the walls stable? Can you put a roof on it?



Water play - Water is a rich STEM material. Keep the towels handy to help with the spills. Experiment with tools like a turkey baster, empty dish detergent bottles, plastic measuring cups, etc. to fill and compare. Use math language like more, less, equal. What floats? What doesn't? How many objects can go in a tinfoil boat or other container before it sinks? First predict how many or what will happen?

Cook together - Make snack, pancakes, muffins or even salad! Children can measure, mix, stack (Have you ever had a salad sandwich?), divide and transport. It's full of science, math and technology.

All of these activities also include self-regulation, impulse control, social skills, fine and gross motor development and lots of language! Look for STEM at Playgroup and try it at home.



Written by Jane Paul – EarlyON Parent Education Coordinator

Process, not Product

When you do art and craft activities with children, the process—how things happen—is often much more important than the product—the object you end up with.

Exploring possibilities

Process is especially important for toddlers and young preschoolers who are just beginning to explore the world around them. They have lots to learn about the feel of finger paint between their fingers, the way it can be pushed around on paper and the way the colours mix together. It's not at all important that their painting be beautiful. Their first attempts might end up a deep brown mixture of all the colours and that's fine. They discovered a lot about colours and textures.

Discovering solutions

When you think more about process than about the product of art and craft activities, you will encourage children to try out new materials. You want them to discover different ways to put paint on paper, how different textures can be made to stick to one another, what happens when you try to build with egg cartons. While they are doing this, children also get a chance to develop their problem solving skills. Let them try things their way, even if it doesn't always turn out. Not everything they make has to be put on show on the refrigerator door!

Basic Craft Supplies

Here are some basic craft supplies that will encourage children to express themselves through arts and crafts.

- child-safe scissors
- glue sticks, white glue or paste
- large and regular-sized crayons (washable)
- markers, some with different tips (washable)
- coloured pencils, chalk
- paint and paint brushes
- construction paper, newsprint, scrap paper
- popsicle sticks
- wool and fabric scraps
- empty boxes, milk and egg cartons, toilet paper rolls
- wrapping paper scraps, ribbon
- old catalogues, magazines, greeting cards

Painting beyond brushes

Just about anything can be turned into a creative and interesting tool to paint with. Let your imagination run wild.

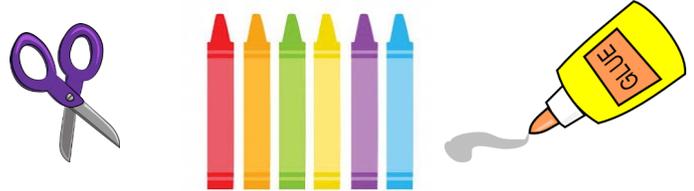
- Brushes (small, toothbrushes, etc)
- Large paint rollers (attach to a broom handle. Children can roller paint on the sidewalk)
- Fingers and toes
- Sponges, Q-tips, eye droppers
- Squeeze bottles and spray bottles
- Cookie cutters, toy animals (print with them)
- Wooden blocks
- Kitchen utensils (potato mashers make interesting designs)
- Marbles (roll them around in a box lined with paper)
- Straws (blow paint around on paper)
- Toy cars (roll them around in paint, then on paper)
- Pine branches
- Carpet pieces, mittens that have lost their mate (print with them)
- Toilet paper rolls (roll on paper; glue string or other textures to rolls)
- Bubble paint (add bubble liquid to paint and blow to paint bubbles on paper)
- String, wool
- Ice cubes (mix paint with lots of water in yogurt containers, add a popsicle stick for handle, freeze)

Following a model

On the other hand, sometimes you may decide to put more emphasis on making a craft that looks like a specific finished product. Copying a model is a very different skill from creating from imagination. Older children may be ready to try following an example, once they've learned how materials and tools work. They may even enjoy the challenge, although there should always be room for individual creativity.

Playing with materials

Even after the age of first discovery, children still need opportunities to just enjoy the process, without worrying whether their product will be "pretty" or "good". With that pressure removed, older children (and even adults!) can have fun playing around with materials and discovering new effects. When you plan art experiences, remember to keep a balance between aiming at the product and simply letting the process unfold.



Workshops

Workshop (Pre-Registration Necessary— Call 613-283-0095 x300)	Date	Time	Location
Kids Have Stress Too	Monday, January 28th	6:30 - 8:30 pm	Almonte Library, 155 High St.
Triple P **FREE CHILDCARE**	Monday, January 28th **5 week session/attend all**	10:00 am - 12:00 pm	30 Bennett St, Carleton Place
Positive Parenting	Monday, February 4th	6:30 - 8:30 pm	Arklan School, 123 Patterson St., Carleton Place
You're Not the Boss of Me!	Wednesday, February 6th & 13th ** 2 week session/attend both**	6:30 - 8:30 pm	Perth Pool Annex, 3 Sunset Blvd., Perth

REMEMBER....ALL OF OUR WORKSHOPS ARE



Staff Directory

Children's Resources on Wheels 613-283-0095	EXT	EMAIL
General/Reception	300	reception@crowlanark.com
Diane Bennett, Executive Assistant	313	dbennett@crowlanark.com
Joyce Buckley, Program Facilitator– Perth	307	jbuckley@crowlanark.com
Sue Cavanagh, Executive Director	303	scavanagh@crowlanark.com
Linda Cybulski, Program Facilitator – Almonte	314	lcybulski@crowlanark.com
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Peggy Lavigueur, Bookkeeper	302	plavigueur@crowlanark.com
Janice Kelly, Home Visitor Licensed Home Child Care	306	janice@crowlanark.com
Issie Mullen, Program Facilitator – Carleton Place	315	imullen@crowlanark.com
Jane Paul, Parent Education Coordinator	305	jpaul@crowlanark.com
Andrea Snyder, Program Facilitator – Lanark, Montague	318	asnyder@crowlanark.com
Janet Wheeler, Resource	311	jwheeler@crowlanark.com
Lori Wintle, Program Facilitator – Smiths Falls	310	lwintle@crowlanark.com

Playgroup Schedule

Day	Location	Time	Staff	Dates
Monday	Almonte - Naismith School	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Linda	Jan 7, 14, 21, 28
Monday	Baby Talk Group at Almonte Library – Almonte	2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Linda	Jan 7, 14, 21, 28
Monday	Carleton Place - Arena	9:00 am -12:00 pm	Issie	Jan 7, 14, 21, 28
Monday	Carleton Place - Caldwell School	9:30 am -11:30 am	Andrea	Jan 7, 14, 21, 28
Monday	Perth - Perth Pool Annex	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Joyce	Jan 7, 14, 21, 28
Monday	Perth - Perth Pool Annex (Afternoon)	1:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Joyce	Jan 7, 14, 21, 28
Monday	Smiths Falls - EarlyON Child & Family Centre	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Lori	Jan 7, 14, 21, 28
Monday	Baby Talk Group at EarlyON Child & Family Centre - Smiths Falls	1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Lori	Jan 7, 14, 21, 28
Tuesday	Almonte - Naismith School	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Linda	Jan 8, 15, 22, 29
Tuesday	Carleton Place -Caldwell School	9:30 am - 11:30 am	Issie	Jan 8, 15, 22, 29
Tuesday	Montague - Montague Centennial Hall	9:00 am -12:00 pm	Andrea	Jan 8, 15, 22, 29
Tuesday	Perth - Perth Pool Annex	9:00 am -12:00 pm	Joyce	Jan 8, 15, 22, 29
Tuesday	Smiths Falls - EarlyON Child & Family Centre	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Lori	Jan 8, 15, 22, 29
Wednesday	Almonte - R Tait MacKenzie School	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Linda	Jan 9, 16, 23, 30
Wednesday	Almonte - Naismith School (NOTE LOCATION)	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Linda	Jan 2
Wednesday	Carleton Place - Arena	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Issie	Jan 9, 16, 23, 30
Wednesday	Carleton Place - Lanark Community Programs, 30 Bennett St **NEW FRENCH PLAYGROUP**	9:30 am - 11:30 am	Jen	Jan 16
Wednesday	Baby Talk Group at Caldwell School - Carleton Place (NOTE TIME CHANGE)	1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Issie	Jan 9, 16, 23, 30
Wednesday	Lanark - Maple Grove School	9:30 am - 12:00 pm	Andrea	Jan 9, 16, 23, 30
Wednesday	Perth - Perth & District Union Library	9:00 am -12:00 pm	Joyce	Jan 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
Wednesday	Smiths Falls - Lower Reach Park (Kinsmen Bldg.)	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Lori	Jan 9, 16, 23, 30
Thursday	Almonte - R Tait MacKenzie School	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Linda	Jan 10, 17, 24, 31
Thursday	Almonte - Naismith School (NOTE LOCATION)	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Linda	Jan 3
Thursday	Carleton Place - Caldwell School	9:30 am - 11:30 am	Issie	Jan 3, 10, 17, 24, 31
Thursday	Lanark - Maple Grove School	9:30 am -12:00 pm	Andrea	Jan 3, 10, 17, 24, 31
Thursday	Perth - Perth Pool Annex	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Joyce	Jan 3, 10, 17, 24, 31
Thursday	Baby Talk Group at Perth Pool Annex - Perth	1:00 pm - 2:30 pm	Joyce	Jan 10, 17, 24, 31
Thursday	Smiths Falls - EarlyON Child & Family Centre	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Lori	Jan 3, 10, 17, 24, 31
Friday	Smiths Falls - EarlyON Child & Family Centre	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Jen	Jan 4, 11, 18, 25

Saturday Events

Jan 5th, 9 am—12 pm: Enjoy a Saturday morning playgroup with Lori at the Smiths Falls EarlyON Centre, 4 Ross St. (park and enter on Harold St.)

Jan 12th, 10 am—11:30 am: Joyce from Perth playgroup will be "Playing with Pasta" at Carolina Retirement Suites. Drop by and join her!

Jan 19th, 10 am—12 pm: Join Janet for a "5 Senses" playgroup at the EarlyON Centre in Smiths Falls, 4 Ross St (park and enter on Harold St.)

Jan 26th, 9:30 am– 11:30 am: Jen will be hosting a French playgroup at J.L-Couroux in Carleton Place. Come join in on the fun!



Children's Resources on Wheels (CROW)
4 Ross St., Smiths Falls, ON K7A 4L5
613-283-0095

