

*Painting can affect all of the senses as it simultaneously engages our minds and bodies.*

*With an amazing sense of wonder, a child equipped with a brush can plunge into colours, glide, swoop, dab and sweep as they change a plain piece of paper into vista of colours, shapes and textures—a 'play space'.*

## Support children by using appropriate materials

Materials matter. When we provide children with resources for painting, we are sending the message of a welcome to paint. We are also conveying unspoken messages through the materials and tools we have provided.

- Are they of the highest quality that we can afford?
- Are they undamaged and presented in a clean and attractive way?
- Is there enough for the intended number of users?



By supporting children's learning through the best materials and tools we are able to supply, we are letting children know the value we place on their explorations, experimentations and expressions through art media. We are demonstrating that we hold 'high expectations' for children's achievement in learning by giving all children 'the tools for achieving educational success'. This is highlighted in Principle 3, 'High expectations and Equity' of the Early Years Learning Framework (Pg 12).

In art terms, the surface to which a pigment is applied is called **the support**. Artists take great measures to ensure that the 'support' that they have chosen is the correct one for the other

materials that they wish to use. As educators, we need to create 'Learning Environments' that supply children with options to suit their developing styles and techniques. We need to ensure that our 'settings are responsive to children's interests and needs' as identified in the Early Years Learning Framework on *Practices—Learning Environments* pg 15.

## Children as capable and competent artists

Using appropriate materials is a way in which we, as educators, can show that we appreciate what children do and are capable of. Artists wouldn't choose an A4 sized piece of newsprint to paint on when using a big bold brush (newsprint soaks up paint, dulls colours and tears easily). Instead they would more likely choose a large piece of firm paper so they could really engage using their whole bodies in the rhythm and flow of a painting. Quality brushes are also important as it is the fibers and composition of the brush that determines the manner in which paint can be manipulated. A range of quality brushes enables children to select what suits their needs and affords children greater prospects for further experimentation and improved learning

### Interacting and guiding positively:

When interacting with children as they are exploring or expressing through paint, it is much more valuable to use the dialogue of encouragement rather than praise—see more information in the PSCTas Fact Sheet *Encouragement vs. Praise* [www.psctas.org.au](http://www.psctas.org.au)



# Painting with young children

*in early years education and care settings*

*The National Quality Standard supports children being immersed in quality physical environments that are inclusive, promote competence, independence exploration and learning through play. (NQS Standard 3.2)*

*Quality area 5 of the National Standards also highlights the importance of developing and maintaining respectful and equitable relationships with each child and interactions are warm and responsive to support learning. (NQS 5.1.1).*

## Responsiveness

Our *Responsiveness to children* is a key aspect of our pedagogical practice. When we are responsive to children we are able to *'value and build on children's strengths, skills and knowledge to ensure their motivation and engagement in learning.'* EYLF pg.14.

Urslua Kolbe, in her book *Rapunzel's Supermarket* makes some interesting points on how we should interact and guide children as they paint:

- Share in children's delight in what they've made appear—smile, a nod, a glance of genuine interest, may be all the acknowledgement they need.
- Gently guide toddlers into returning brushes to the right pot of paint so that the colours remain as pure as possible.
- Ensure that each child has an equally enchanting experience, replacing paints and brushes where necessary.
- Show them how to wipe a brush across the edge of a paint pot so excess paint doesn't go where they don't want.
- Encourage finger painters to explore what their fingers can do.
- If a child is seeking comment, try affirming what they have done—e.g. 'I see you've made the blue change to green' or 'You've made a long swoop that goes right to the top corner!'

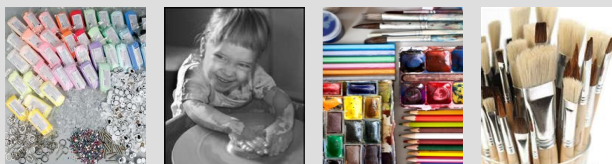
## For more information...

Try Ursula Kolbe book *Rapunzel's Supermarket*. Available in the Zara Gowrie Resource library. e: [psctas@gowrie-tas.com.au](mailto:psctas@gowrie-tas.com.au) p: 62306824

## Some helpful tips

'Can you help me paint a fire engine?' or similar questions are often asked. It's helpful to break down a task into steps—'Which part would you like to start with first? The wheels? Looking at an actual model or a picture may help.

'I don't know what to paint!' A good response to this plea is: 'Try out the colours and see what the brush can do. Then when you are ready to make a painting, you can have a fresh piece of paper.'



## Some questions for reflection.

The Early Year Learning Framework names '*Ongoing learning and reflective practice*' as one of the principles that underpin quality practice in early childhood settings.

*Here are some reflective questions to consider when painting with children.*

- How do I as an educator currently stimulate a child's thinking and enrich the learning that they may be engaged in whilst painting? How do I approach children to do this?
- What materials do I provide that can give children scope for challenge and new creative opportunity?
- How often am I with children as an educator as they paint?
- Do I spend time in preparing the materials in attractive ways to promote curiosity and intrigue?

