

Lesson Plan: Little Explorers' Texture Painting

Materials Needed:

- **Paint:** Non-toxic, washable tempera paint in 2-3 primary colors (e.g., red, yellow, blue).
- **Painting Surface:** A large roll of paper, cardboard, or several sheets of thick paper taped to a table or the floor.
- **Paint Containers:** Paper plates or shallow trays for dispensing paint.
- **"Brushes":** A collection of various textured items. Avoid small objects that could be choking hazards.
 - **Natural Items:** Large leaves, pinecones, sturdy twigs, flower heads.
 - **Household Items:** Sponges (cut into different shapes), crumpled foil, bubble wrap, fly swatters, potato mashers.
 - **Toys:** Large plastic animal figures (to make footprints), toy cars (to make tracks).
- **Clean-Up Supplies:** A smock or old t-shirt for each child, a vinyl tablecloth or old sheet to protect the work surface, a basin of soapy water, and old towels or paper towels.

1. Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, Oliver, Mila, and Reggie will be able to:

- Explore cause and effect by making marks with different objects.
- Practice fine motor skills by grasping and manipulating various "brushes."
- Engage their sense of touch by feeling the paint and different textures.
- Begin to notice color mixing as paints blend on the paper.

2. Alignment with Early Childhood Development Domains

- **Cognitive Development:** Fostering curiosity and understanding that different actions (stamping, rolling, dragging) produce different results.
- **Fine Motor Skills:** Developing hand-eye coordination and strengthening hand muscles needed for grasping and control.
- **Sensory & Creative Expression:** Providing a safe outlet for sensory exploration (touch, sight) and self-expression without a focus on a "correct" outcome.
- **Language Development:** Introducing new vocabulary like "bumpy," "smooth," "track," "stamp," and color names.

3. Instructional Procedure (Step-by-Step)

Part 1: The Setup (5 minutes)

1. Cover the floor or a low table with an old sheet or tablecloth.
2. Tape down the large paper surface so it doesn't move.
3. Pour small amounts of each paint color onto separate paper plates, leaving space between them.
4. Arrange the collection of textured "brushes" nearby, making them easily accessible.
5. Have smocks and clean-up supplies ready to go.

Part 2: Invitation to Create (2 minutes)

1. Gather Oliver, Mila, and Reggie around the prepared art space.

2. Show them the materials with excitement. Say something like, "Look at all these fun things! We have red paint, blue paint, and look at this bumpy pinecone and this soft sponge. I wonder what will happen if we dip them in the paint?"
3. Model the process simply: Dip one item (like a sponge) into a color and press it onto the paper. React with wonder: "Wow! The sponge made a square! Oliver, would you like to try?"

Part 3: Exploration and Creation (10-15 minutes)

1. Allow the children to lead the exploration. Let them choose which tools and colors to use. There is no right or wrong way to paint.
2. **Facilitate, Don't Direct:** Use open-ended questions and descriptive language to narrate their actions.
 - "Mila, you're using the toy car! Look at the long tracks it's making in the yellow paint."
 - "Reggie, I see you are stamping with the leaf. It makes such a pretty pattern."
 - "What happens when the blue and red paint touch? Wow, look at that new color!"
3. Encourage them to experiment with different movements: stamping, dabbing, rolling, and smearing. If they want to use their hands, let them! This is a valuable sensory experience.

Part 4: Wind-Down and Clean-Up (5 minutes)

1. Give a 2-minute warning, such as, "We have time to make two more stamps, and then it will be time to clean up."
2. Make clean-up part of the fun. Let them help wash the non-natural tools (sponges, toys) in the basin of soapy water. Talk about the colors washing away.
3. Help them wash their hands and arms, talking about how the soap feels.
4. Display their collaborative artwork somewhere they can see it. Revisit it later and talk about what you see. "I remember when you rolled the car here, Oliver!"

4. Differentiation and Inclusivity

- **For a Child Hesitant to Get Messy:** Offer tools with longer handles like the fly swatter or potato masher so their hands stay further from the paint. You can also offer "mess-free" finger painting by placing a few blobs of paint on paper inside a sealed zip-top bag; they can smush the paint with their fingers through the plastic.
- **For the Highly Engaged Child:** Introduce a new element midway through, like a spray bottle with water to see how it makes the paint run, or add a third color to encourage more color mixing discoveries.
- **Varying Motor Skills:** Ensure there is a mix of tools—some that are easy to grasp (sponges), and some that present more of a challenge (twigs).

5. Assessment (Informal Observation)

This is not a test, but a way to notice development. During the activity, observe and mentally note:

1. **Engagement:** Did the child show interest and participate in the activity? (e.g., Oliver stayed focused for 5 minutes, Mila explored 3 different tools).
2. **Motor Skills:** How did the child grasp the objects? Did they use a whole-hand grasp (palmer grasp) or are they starting to use their fingers more? (e.g., Reggie used a whole-hand grasp on the sponge).
3. **Exploration:** Did the child experiment with different tools or colors? Did they discover that a rolling toy makes a different mark than a stamping one?
4. **Language:** Did they react to or use any of the new vocabulary words?