Stanislaus County
Office of
Education

Child/Family Services

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Resource & Referral Handout

Creating Paper Towel Art

You don't need to travel far to provide an imaginative outlet for your child. The following activities are low-cost and easy to do -- right in your kitchen.

What You Need

- newspapers
- white paper towels
- child and adult scissors
- glue
- construction paper
- variety of food colors
- eye dropper
- paints
- small bowls or cups

What You Do Together:

Cover a table with newspaper and get set for each of these four activities.

1. Towel Twists

Cut paper towels into different-sized pieces. Then demonstrate how to twist one piece by hand or by rolling it along the table. Ask your child to twist the other pieces and to glue the twists upright on a sheet of construction paper to create a three-dimensional collage. Suggest that he intertwine the twists and add color by dipping them into food coloring before gluing.

2. Simple Snowflakes

Fold a paper towel into four quarters. Then help your child make small cuts and notches along all the edges to create a unique design. (Make sure that the cuts and notches do not overlap.) Unfold it to reveal the snowflake.

3. Pretty Prints

Fold a paper towel any number of times. Then let your child use an eyedropper to drop splotches of food coloring onto it. Open the paper towel to see a colorful pattern.

4. Paper-Strip Painting

Cut a paper towel into strips of various widths. Invite your child to paint with the strips by dipping them into paint and then sweeping then across a sheet of paper. He can use the strips as single brushes or combine a few for different designs.

More Ways to Learn

Weigh the possibilities.

Gather a few small unbreakable items, and ask your child to predict which ones a paper towel will hold and which will fall through. Then hold a paper towel between your hands and let the experiment begin. Try conducting the test with a wet paper towel, and compare the results.

Read all about it.

Help your child gather various paper products -- such as paper towels, newspaper, and paper bags -- to make a book about paper. Cut the paper into same-size sheets, and let your child use them to write and illustrate a story. Then glue the pages together and enjoy his recycled storybook.