

Activity: Creative Expression/Arts **Goal: Sensory** **Populations: Children/Youth**

TH Activity Plan – Handmade Paper

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Materials

3 plastic tubs large enough to completely submerge hoops (1 per group of 4 participants)

Paper, such as newspaper, construction paper, copy paper, tissue paper, etc.

Blender not used for food

4 6-8" embroidery hoops & 4 canning lid rings per group of 4

Remay cloth (spun bonded polyester, also known as row cover), sold at garden centers or as interfacing in fabric stores

Old bath towels or absorbent cloth such as felt or flannel, large enough to hold a few pieces of paper on one half & the other half free to be folded over - 2 fabric pieces per piece of paper

Dried herbs (flowers/leaves)
Large spoons for handling pulp
Pitchers of warm water or faucet
Rubber bands

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants will make handmade paper with plant materials.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Practice sequencing, executive function skills

Physical: Exercise fine motor skills; build hand dexterity

Sensory: Engage olfactory and tactile senses; increase tolerance for handling variety of materials; practice sensory integration

Social: Work collaboratively in a peer group; practice communication

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Prep:** Harvest and prepare dried herbs (see Pressing and Drying Herbs activity). Cut Remay cloth into pieces that will fit in the embroidery hoops and canning lids. Pieces can be used repeatedly on different occasions. Prepare a tray for each participant. Each tray should include several pieces of Remay cloth cut to the general size of the frames being utilized with a 1" border around the edges when in place. Provide several pieces of paper to use in paper making and rubber bands. Set up an area for drying: lay out several towels folded in half lengthwise on top of cookie sheets. Set out dried herbs that will be added to the paper and any other remaining materials.
2. Facilitator begins by dividing participants into groups of four to share a tub of water. Pass out gloves/aprons and assist with putting them on participants.
3. Give each participant a canning lid ring and embroidery hoop. Place a piece of Remay flat on the table and lay the ring on it so it forms a shallow container. Secure the Remay around the ring with a rubber band. Trim the Remay, so that the edge extends no longer than ½" beyond the edge of the ring.
4. To prepare the embroidery hoop, unscrew and separate the two rings; place a piece of Remay inside the larger ring. Reunite the two pieces of the hoop and tighten the knob on top. Pull the Remay gently to insure that it is taut in the hoop. Trim the Remay, so that the edge is no longer than ½" beyond the frame of the hoop.
5. Rip the paper into very small pieces, about 1/2" by 1/2". Use mostly white paper & add colors intentionally, or the paper color will look muddled. Paper may be torn into pieces anytime before paper-making is done. Place paper pieces in the blender until half full.
6. Add petals or plant materials for color at this point. Colored paper can be added sparingly so it does not darken the mix too much.

7. Add warm water until the blender is 3/4 full. Run the blender on the lowest speed at first and progressively increase the speed until the pulp looks smooth and well blended (approx. 40 seconds). Make sure there are no large chunks of paper left in the mix. Continue to blend until they have broken down. Pour the pulp into the tub.
8. Fill the tub with one gallon of warm water for every blender full of pulp. Additional pulp will thicken the texture of the finished paper. Stir the mixture.
9. Have participants put their hands in the water, so that they can get comfortable with the temperature and consistency of the solution. Wearing gloves helps to avoid skin reactions to dyes in the paper.
10. Using a gentle scooping motion, submerge the embroidery hoop/canning lid frame into the pulp with both hands, one on either side of the ring, making sure to keep it level. Wiggle the frame side to side gently until the pulp is evenly covering the top of the Remay.
11. Slowly lift the frame up above the water. Allow the water to drain from the new sheet of paper. If paper is uneven, re-dip the frame, repeating the previous step until the surface looks even. If paper is too thick, remove some pulp from the tub or add more water and stir. If it is too thin, add more pulp and stir.
12. Once the water has drained from the frame, place the frame on top of an absorbent cloth or towel. Remove the Remay from the frame (either the hoop or the canning lid) and leave it on the towel.
13. *Optional*, add pressed flowers (if available), placing them on the wet paper. Using a tissue, carefully pull it apart so that a very thin sheet is left. Dip the thin sheet of tissue into the pulp mixture and lay it on top of the paper with the pressed flowers to keep them from peeling off.
14. Cover the paper with another absorbent cloth or the other half of the towel and apply pressure evenly to squeeze out any remaining water. You may use a rolling pin or a cookie sheet for this purpose, if you prefer a smoother texture to the paper.
15. When the paper is dry enough to handle, carefully peel Remay off the paper. If the paper is very thin, you may need to wait until the paper is completely dry. The same piece of Remay can be used repeatedly.
16. Repeat the above steps until the desired amount of paper is completed.

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: This multi-step activity gives young participants with tactile sensitivities or those with attention and focus challenges exposure to a variety of hands-on materials and practice sensory integration, sequencing, and executive functioning skills. As some participants with tactile sensitivities may be hesitant when handling materials, use tools, such as disposable or dish gloves, aprons, and long handled mixing spoons or scoops, to help them build confidence. Use techniques, like task sharing and modeling, to increase engagement. Provide a printed list of steps (with photos, *optional*) to aid participants in completing each step.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: For participants with olfactory and tactile sensitivities, use disposable gloves to protect hands and reduce lingering scents on hands following activity. Supervise safe handling of materials and equipment during the activity. Facilitator should be the only one handling essential oils. Monitor participants with tendencies to place non-food items in the mouth.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: Facilitators should try this activity alone first to get the hang of it before incorporating participants. The canning lids tend to be much easier to use than the embroidery hoops. The facilitator may only want to use the lids at first and try the embroidery hoops at a later date. Allow participants to make choices concerning the types of paper or plant materials used; add seeds to pulp to make plantable paper. Add essential oils to the paper for stimulation of olfactory senses. Use paper as gift tags or cards.

Refer to THAD *Pressing and Drying Herbs* activity plan.

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

Climate Kids program at NASA. (accessed 2023). Make seed paper. <https://climatekids.nasa.gov/seed-paper/>
The Herbal Academy. (2020). Handmade floral paper. <https://theherbalacademy.com/handmade-floral-paper/>

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