



Using Art Projects as a Vehicle for Teaching Science

By now most educators are familiar with the call for students to have more experience in STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. Some policy-makers are advocating for STEAM, an expansion of STEM to include the Arts.

Many early childhood teachers feel that they are not ready to teach science. Integrating science content into familiar types of art projects may help them stay in their 'comfort zone' while they teach their students some science content and process skills. The children are learning and hopefully the teachers are becoming more comfortable with the process of teaching science.

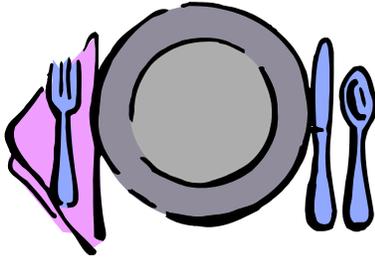
Within the next year, ScienceStart! will be offering a new product – a set of twenty art projects that will provide a context for teaching science to young children. These will be evenly divided across the ScienceStart! domains of Measurement and Mapping, Properties of Matter, Movement and Machines, Color and Light, and Neighborhood Habitat.

There are directions below for making a reusable placemat that 'maps' how to set the table. This project gives teachers the opportunity to talk about representations, about how maps offer different types of representation, and so forth. Using the placemats on a daily basis also gives students an opportunity to have more autonomy in setting the table for snack or lunch.



If you would like to receive four more of our Science and Art Activities, please make a request through email, at Info@ScienceStart.com.

SETTING THE TABLE FOR SNACK/LUNCH



Objective: This activity is about making a map, or plan, of your table setting for snack time or lunch time. This plan can then be followed exactly day after day by referring to the map. The children will learn the names of utensils and where to place them on a placemat.

What you will need for each child:

- Crayons or markers
- The place setting map on 8 1/2 x 11 paper for each child to color while you talk about the purpose of a placemat.
- One large sheet of manila/ colored paper, approx. 16 x 11 for each child.
- Cut-outs of the objects used in your classroom for lunch time – these may include napkins, forks, spoons, knives, plates, cups, glasses, and so forth.
- Glue

What to do:

- Talk to the children about snack time or lunch time. What do they eat? How do they eat? They will probably respond by talking about using their hands and fingers, as well as the use of cups, bowls, plates, forks, spoons and knives.
- Show them some of the foods you have for snack/lunch, asking them what utensils they would use to eat them.
- Get out the example of a place setting and have the children color it in. Talk about how the utensils are placed on the paper. Where is the plate? Where is the Glass? Etc.
- Now, help the children place the cut-outs on their large piece of paper in the appropriate places, following the place-setting they just colored. (You will want to tailor the map to the items that you use during your snack/lunch. For example, you may only use a spoon, napkin, and cup.)
- Once the child agrees that their large paper looks the same as the map they colored earlier, they can glue the pieces in place.
- Make sure each child's placemat has his/her name on it. Laminate these placemats and use them at snack time or meal time. This is a wonderful guide for a Snack Helper and is excellent for name recognition.

Extensions:

Make a place setting for a family member using the paper provided. Encourage children to take the placemats home and use them for meal times.

Literacy Connections:

- **Do Not Feed The Table** by Dee Lillegard. *A book of short poems about kitchen utensils and equipment.*
- **How My Parents Learned To Eat** by Ina R. Friedman. *Different customs within a family are shown by the use of chopsticks and knife and fork at the dinner table.*
- **A Map is a Picture** by Barbara Rinkoff. *Discover through beautifully illustrated pictures what a map can be.*