

COLORS

How do young children learn about color?

During the month we dove into a prolonged study of color. We talked, read, and sang about colors. We hunted for specific colors in our classroom and school. We dressed up for the "color of the day." We painted with a single color white paper and on colored paper. We mixed colors with paint brushes and with our bare hands. We took a single color of paint and added white to make different tints, or we added black to create different shades. Finally we painted with all three elements, colored, white, and black paint, and found infinite possibilities of color mixing.

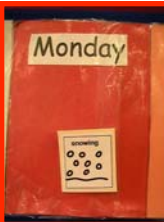
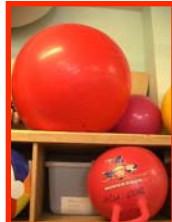




Colors in our environment

A lot of learning about color happens in the context of every day preschool activities, but we also teach explicitly about color in many ways. Olivia used our multi-colored tape dispenser to create art, while Gaby practiced learning to count and read numbers while matching the animals to the colored squares on the number line.



Colors of the day


As part of our study of color we focused on one color each day. On the red day we hunted for all the red things we could find in our classroom. On the orange day we put out red and yellow paints for mixing. We also invited the children to dress up in the color of the day, and of course the teachers joined in the fun too!

red



blue



yellow



We used paint to learn about, enjoy, and marvel in the wonder of colors. Teachers gradually increased the complexity of the materials to guide the children's emerging understanding of color mixing. At first children painted with a single color of paint on white paper, and later on colored paper to explore this difference. We read "Mouse Paint", a book about mixing *primary* colors, and painted our hands using *primary* colors (yellow, red, and blue), then rubbed them together with a friend to make *secondary* colors (orange, green, and purple). Then we introduced mixing a single *hue* (i.e. green) with white paint to make *tints*, then black paint (*shades*), and finally white and black (making *tones*). Each of these steps affords limitless exploration, and yet with each added element the possibilities seem to expand exponentially. By the end the children were mixing/comparing/discussing a rich variety of *shades*, *tints* and *tones*.

Mixing
green
and
white



Julian- "It's getting little. I mixed the white together." Teacher- "What does it become?" Julian- "White! They're not the same; they're different. (*Comparing his paint color to Elian's paint color.*) There's no more white!" Teacher- "What happened?" Julian- "I mixed them together. Look it turns green Elian. (the white turned green)." Elian- "They match!" *Elian is comparing his color to Julian's.* Julian- "The paint is different." *Elian continues to insist that they are the same, but Julian disagrees.*

Mixing
green
and
black



Aaden carried over an idea we worked with a lot during our study of snow, "melting", to describe how colors mix. Aaden- "What are you doing with the black? It's gonna melt, it's still melting." Gabi- "I wanna use green now. Black is dark, you can hold the paper the way it wouldn't move. It's gets darker if you put black because black is dark."

green
and
black



Olivia- "Green. Dark Green. It's getting all green I see some white in the cup."

Mohamed used green and black to make dark green with black accents.

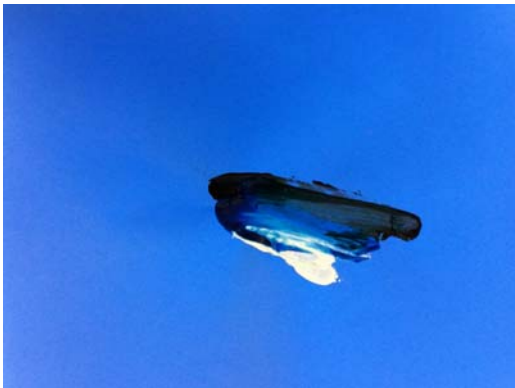
blue,
white,
&
black
on
blue
paper



Mila



Tulle



Mohamed captured a rich gradient of color from black, to blue to white.



Jinann made many shades of grey; the blue was much less pronounced.

green
or
blue
with
black
&
white



Jinann added water to her painting, which gave it a washed out look and partially dissolved the paper.



Teacher- "This blue looks different from that blue."

Tali- "It's more white than that. This is for the mailman."

Tali



Tulle painted strokes that were streaked with green, black, and white, plus many lighter and darker tones of green.

