

**Strategy: Drawing, Writing and Using Tools Effectively (using basic shapes, thinking creatively, movement)**

*One of the broad based strategies in the Kindergarten classes involved using the Matman program from Handwriting Without Tears. I first read the Matman book to the class which focused on shape recognition. We then worked as a whole class while sitting in a circle around the carpet. The children were each provided with large shapes and/or sticks and they each took turns building a large “Matman” in the centre of the carpet (focusing on shape identification, spatial orientation, body awareness and drawing skills). I would then have the kids stand and try to pose in the same position in which they made their Matman (incorporating movement) .*

*Following this I worked with the children in small groups. They were provided with cardstock, flip crayons, mini and regular size popsicle sticks, glue and stickers etc. The children were encouraged to make their own Matman on the card stock (drawing shapes for body, head etc using flip crayons and using different size popsicle sticks for arms, legs etc). The children were very creative and it was exciting to see their imaginations at work – rather than making a regular Matman picture as I had demonstrated they turned their “Matman” pictures into Knights, princesses, dragons, hockey players and baseball players. Instead of using the popsicle sticks as arms and legs as I did they turned them into swords, princess wands, party hats, hockey sticks and baseball bats!*

*Following this activity it was interesting to see how the children used the concepts they learned from the Matman activity. During free play in one class the children were playing with the large foam blocks and were working together to build a 3D Matman. They were comparing heights of their foam block Matman to different children in the class and were discussing and negotiating which blocks would be best for specific body parts.*

*Another broad based strategy activity involved the use of clay and an aquarium/fish theme. I initially read the class a book “Memoirs of a Goldfish” and we then had a group discussion about aquariums, pet fish, ocean animals etc. I introduced the idea of using clay to mold into shapes, animals and sea creatures and demonstrated how to use their hands and fingers to flatten, roll, and pinch and manipulate the clay. Children then worked in small groups at tables and were provided with a tray filled with various items including different coloured clay, feathers, stones, gems, rocks and shells. Once again the children were so much more creative than the example aquarium I showed them.*

*A kindergarten teacher recently sent me an e-mail to let me know that the kids in her class loved working with clay and they had expanded on the idea by creating a variety of clay insects.*

Lynette Dubchak  
Occupational Therapist

**Early Learning  
Occupational Therapy  
Broad-Based Strategies**  
**To be able to express what  
we see and learn through  
drawing, writing and using  
tools efficiently.**

