

Material Magic

Materials

See below

What to do

1. Following are some ideas of how you can use wallpaper, upholstery samples, coffee cans, candy boxes or shoeboxes, and Styrofoam trays in your classroom.

Wallpaper use in classrooms:

1. Call local paint stores or other places where wallpaper sample books are used. Ask if there are any books about to be discarded and see if they will donate the books to your school.
2. Wallpaper samples make excellent bulletin board borders. There are endless possibilities. For example, animal print wallpaper is great as a bulletin board background when doing a theme such as jungle animals or the zoo.
3. You can use wallpaper for many holiday themes. For example, use green plaid wallpaper to make shamrocks for St. Patrick's Day. Roses and flower patterns are great for cutting out hearts for Valentine's Day. Cut out autumn leaf patterns to make Halloween or Thanksgiving placemats.
4. Another good use for wallpaper samples is to make scrapbook covers with them. Put sheets of colored paper between wallpaper samples, fold in half, and staple to make "Good Listener" sticker books. When you read the children a story, if they have been good listeners, place a special sticker inside their sticker books that have their names on them. The children love collecting stickers this way. And when the book is full, they can take them home and you can begin all over again.

Upholstery samples:

1. These also come in sample books. They are somewhat different from wallpaper samples because they are cloth.
2. Cut upholstery samples out of the books and use a sturdy cloth glue such as Liquid Stitch to make wallets, purses, clothes for dolls, and cut-outs for the felt board. Use the large pieces of upholstery samples to make book bags.
3. You can also use them for background scenes on display boards, parent information boards, and so on.

Coffee cans:

1. Coffee cans can be decorated and used to hold many things.
2. Cover the cans with wallpaper or upholstery samples. Glue faux jewels or beads or buttons on the sides or spray paint them any color.
3. Use them to hold marbles (for marble painting), sequins, glitter, buttons, ribbons, or any number of small craft items that need to be in a container.
4. These cans make great flowerpots. Decorate the outside of the can and add a bit of floral Styrofoam to hold artificial flowers, or make tissue flowers using strong and sturdy straws as the stems. This is a great gift for Mother's Day.

Candy and shoeboxes:

1. Candy boxes and shoeboxes are great for making treasure boxes. Children love the idea of having their own box to store treasures in. Whitman's candy boxes are particularly good for this because the lids are attached to the box.
2. Children can use many things to decorate their box, such as wrapping paper, wallpaper, lacy doily napkins, newspaper comics, magazine pictures, and so on.

Styrofoam trays:

1. Styrofoam trays make excellent picture frames. Glue a picture from a magazine, greeting card, or cereal box in the middle of the tray. Secure a piece of yarn or string to the back to hang the picture. Decorate the sides with ribbon or even puzzle pieces if most of the puzzle has been lost or misplaced.

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Shower Curtain Sanity Savers

Materials

Inexpensive shower curtains or liners (available at "dollar" stores)

What to do

1. Before beginning a messy activity, place shower curtains on the floor where the activity will take place. The curtains catch drips of paint, water, glue, and more.