

Some Anecdotes on Crayons

Kindergarten teachers taking part in the Association for Healing Education's Remedial Teacher Training course also experimented with stick crayons in the last year or two.

One teacher decided to offer her class only stick crayons. "The older children were frustrated with blocks. The (stick) drawings had the details they wanted. Even for the younger children, there were more archetypes. They didn't use the big sweeps of color, but they still filled the page."

2 The sample of last year's (block) drawings is small and not strictly comparable. They were colored during lunch-time, rather than as a classroom activity.

Connie Manson of Green Meadow School in Spring Valley, New York, began offering both sticks and blocks after Christmas in 1997. She states that, "from the first day, the children used sticks exclusively, they never chose to use blocks." Connie feels that the use of stick crayons supports the development of the "arch" of the hand; she has questions about the effect of block crayons on the child's developing grip.

Barbara Patterson of Great Oaks School in Evanston, Illinois works with 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 year old children. Barbara has offered sticks, together with a small basket of blocks, for two years. Her impression is that, when only blocks were offered, the children's pictures tended to be back-and-forth arm movement records. With sticks, she sees "more circles, crosses, and even punctuation (points) in the circles."

In Kathleen Boltec's kindergarten at Prairie Hill Waldorf School in East Troy, Wisconsin, stick crayons were used exclusively for two years. She did not notice that the drawings changed in character with the use of sticks. Kathleen feels that stick crayons made it easier to see unusual grasps. "A child holding a block crayon always has a strange grasp! But with sticks we have a developmental progression of what is normal. What is unusual really is visible."

Bernice Lacasse-Waters of the Lake Shore Waldorf Kindergarten in Ontario, Canada has alternated offering sticks and blocks to the children in her class. From September to Christmas of 1998 she offered sticks; from January to March 1999 she offered blocks; and this term (March to year's end) both blocks and sticks have been available.

She has noticed no difference in the coloring of the very youngest children (3 1/2 years old) except that they choose sticks if possible. The oldest children (6 1/2) draw more details with sticks; in the term when only blocks were offered, the children colored with less detail; now this term when both are offered, the children are using greater detail again -- cars, people, houses and trees.

"With block crayons the people were drawn more simplistically. With sticks, there is greater detail -eyes and faces. Some children, using blocks, would just color in the page, making no things at all; some pages were colored solidly, others were colored in arcs of color. When sticks were added again, last term, the children would add things to their drawings again. The oldest children try to hold the block like a stick, and color with the corner, but it doesn't work very well and is awkward. When blocks and sticks are offered, the children rarely use blocks. There is more possibility for detail with sticks, and more happening in the drawings, which is what a 6 year old wants."