

GROUP COLLAGE MURAL: EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS!

The whole class works together to create a grassy hillside, flowing creek, bridge, and, of course, the billy goats and the troll! Use repurposed finger paintings, collage papers, torn scraps and loose parts to brighten a wall, AND both executive functions and the spirit of teamwork!

MATERIALS



- Large piece of **bulletin board paper**, cut to fit on a wall.
- Children's **finger paintings** in brown, blue, and green, torn or cut up, repurposed from other projects or **collage papers** created in advance
- **Construction paper** strips and construction paper "**snips**"
- **Loose parts:** Sticks, rope, popsicle sticks, pebbles, googly eyes, chenille stems, yarn, cotton balls etc.
- Construction paper (full)
- **Glue and other adhesives**, duct tape, and staplers

BACKGROUND (HILLSIDES & WATER) IDEAS

Invite a small group of children to **tear or cut** finger paintings, collage papers, and construction paper scraps into **large and small pieces**.

Which could be rocky hillsides? The grass? The stream?

They can **attach and overlap pieces** to create the background on the mural.

Are there **loose parts** they would like to add?

*It may help younger children if you sketch a **rough outline** of the two hillsides with a place for the stream to flow in between, so they will have an idea of where to attach their torn paper.



Have other children look at the **bridge pictures** in several versions of the story. How can we make a bridge for our mural?

Have them **problem-solve** how to construct the bridge to the scale of the mural.

Provide sticks, string, rope, and other loose parts to inspire their thinking about bridges.

Encourage them to **try out** their ideas by laying them out on the mural first, and then, when they are satisfied, attaching the parts.

THE BRIDGE

BILLY GOATS AND TROLL(S!)

Children may make billy goats any way they want! Have them look at **pictures** to get ideas for **shapes and body parts**. Here's one way:

Start with a **rectangular piece of paper** that can be folded and torn (not cut) by children.

Have children **fold** it width-wise, and **tear** along fold. Set aside one half: the **body!**

Fold one half width wise, and tear along THAT fold.

Fold one of the smaller pieces in half, length-wise, and tear again. **Legs!**

The other small piece can be torn into an oval-like shape. The **head!** Save the scraps: for **horns!**

Glue or tape together, **decorate** as desired and attach to mural.

The **troll** or Chupacabra can be made by tearing paper too. How will you make his teeth? Does he have a tail?

You may end up with 7 billy goats and 5 trolls! Great for storytelling!



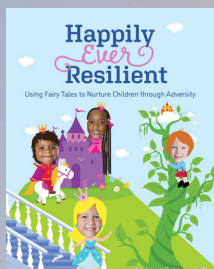
How THIS BUILDS EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS



Looking at fingerpaintings and collage papers and seeing water, hills and trolls is a great way to promote cognitive flexibility! Focusing on the steps required to tear, cut, glue, paint etc. exercises those working memory neural pathways! Taking creative risks and working close to other children can develop inhibitory control.

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE RESILIENCE MAGIC!

Relationships, with both adults and peers, are the foundation of resilience. Providing opportunities for children to create something as a group, and then displaying it in the classroom builds community, and encourages friendships and social problem-solving, too!



*Adapted from **Happily Ever Resilient: Using Fairy Tales to Nurture Children Through Adversity**, Redleaf Press

