



ADVANCE THANKS KAREN EARTH

The cards above were made using the simple techniques outlined in this article. There are many more ways to be creative with watercolors.

# Watercolor Note Cards

A wonderful, low-cost, creative project to do with your clients | By Karen Earith

This project can be easily graded and modified to address specific goals, including: following directions, prehension, grip strength, bilateral FMC, scissors, perception, proprioception and tactile stimulation. It can be used for a writing prompt or developed into a life-skills project to be manufactured, packaged and sold. I have used this project successfully with a wide range of clients, from special education students to adults with physical disabilities.

## The Project

1. Apply water to watercolor paper with a paint brush or spray bottle.
2. Apply watercolor paints randomly, covering entire paper.
3. Sprinkle table salt onto paper and let dry.
4. Brush/rub excess salt off paper.
5. Trace shape on back of paper. Tear or cut out shape. (Tearing away from self will produce a colored edge. Tearing toward self will produce a white edge.)
6. Attach cutout to front of blank note card using glue stick or liquid glue applied with brush or fingers.
7. Decorate with rub-ons or stickers.
8. Of course, no masterpiece is complete without a signature. Sign the front or

rubber stamp "made by" on the back. This is the basic project. In its basic form, clients of all skill levels end up with a successful, aesthetic final product that they can be proud of. But why stop there? There are numerous modifications that can quickly and easily broaden the scope of this project.

## Modification Ideas

- Use needlenose pliers or a jig to shape armature wire. Hammer the shaped wire flat and glue to card using tacky glue.
- Use the theme of the rub-on or sticker images to stimulate writing on the inside of the card. Address the envelope and mail it.
- Set up specific assembly standards. Package completed cards in sets of 5. Teach marketing and money management by selling them.
- Develop a supply list and organize a shopping outing. Check out the scrapbooking aisle for more embellishing ideas.
- Glue the finished card to a mat board and frame it. Mat board scraps are free from many frame shops. Have the client build the frame for an added challenge.
- Take a photo or cut out a magazine picture that relates to the image on the cover and glue it to the inside. Explore concepts

like matching, before/after, baby/adult, cause/effect.

- Rubber stamp images on blank paper. Color can be applied with an ink pad, markers or sponged on with acrylic paint. Use this paper in place of or along with the water-colored paper.
- You can't go wrong with glitter!

I'm sure once you've worked with this project, you will discover other creative therapeutic uses for it. Please write me with your ideas for this project. ■

*Karen Earith, OTR/L, brings art into special ed classrooms across Tennessee as an artist-in-residence. These projects are designed to support and enhance specific academic lessons identified by the teacher. Karen also presents lectures on using art successfully in special education. She can be reached at BaileyFiberArt@aol.com.*

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