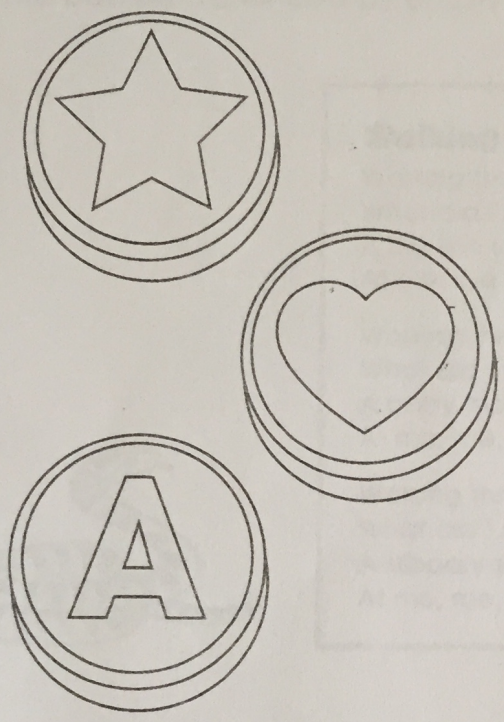
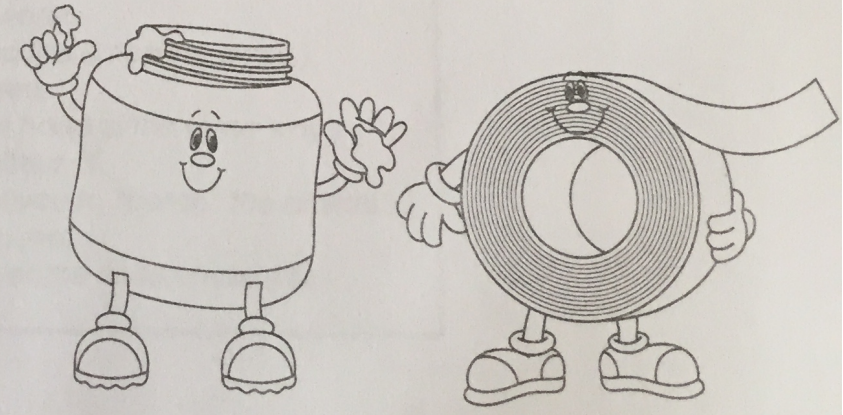
Stencils



Collect plastic lids from containers, such as cottage cheese, margarine, or potato salad tubs. Use a craft knife to cut a number, letter, or shape in each lid. Display the number stencils in a box decorated with numbers, the letter stencils in a box decorated with letters, and the shape stencils in a box decorated with shapes. Place the stencil boxes on a table with paper, watercolors, and paintbrushes. Demonstrate placing the stencils on paper, painting over them, and lifting the stencils to reveal the pattern on the paper. Let the children choose a variety of stencils and colors to create unique paintings. (Tape the back of the stencils onto the paper so they do not move while the children are painting.)

Variations: Find the letters in a child's name. Arrange the letters in order on a sheet of paper and let him paint his name. Find the number stencil that corresponds to the child's age and let him "date" his artwork.

Layered Paintings

Help each child use painter's tape to secure differently sized construction paper strips or shapes to a large sheet of construction paper or a piece of cardboard (the "canvas"). Let him paint his canvas, then allow the painting to dry. Help the child tape additional strips or shapes to the canvas and let him paint again with a different color. Allow the painting to dry again. Help the child to carefully remove the layers of tape and strips or shapes to reveal his final artwork.

Variations: Use two contrasting colors that fit a current theme, such as red and white, orange and green, or purple and yellow. Use the resulting canvas for other activities, such as a book cover.