

## EEF Grant 2025-2026

- Your First and Last Name: Ashley Leathers
- Project Title Paint and Play: A Movable Art Wall for Little Artists
- Amount Requested: 5244.90
  - \$500 for Single Class project
  - \$2,500 for a Team or Grade Level project
  - \$5,000 for a School-wide project
- Grade Level(s) TK/K
- Number of Classrooms participating 9
- Approximate number of students participating 173

•**Project Summary:** Please write 1 paragraph to summarize your project. Keep to 250 words or less. 10 points

*Paint & Play: A Movable Art Wall for Little Innovators* is an interactive, portable painting station designed to spark creativity, collaboration, and innovation among Transitional Kindergarten (TK) and Kindergarten students. This project brings the joy of hands-on art to outdoor play spaces, transforming recess into an opportunity for imagination and exploration. The movable wall encourages students to think creatively, express themselves freely, and work together on shared artistic projects, fostering both social-emotional growth and early problem-solving skills. By integrating art with movement and outdoor exploration, the project supports innovative teaching practices that nurture curiosity and creativity beyond the classroom. Teachers and support staff can use the wall for open-ended painting, sensory experiences, or STEAM-based art activities that inspire wonder and discovery. The portable design ensures easy setup, cleanup, and storage, making it a practical and engaging addition to outdoor learning. Ultimately, *Paint & Play* empowers young learners to see themselves as artists, inventors, and collaborators—building the foundation for a lifelong love of learning through creativity and innovation.

•**How is this project innovative or creative?** These are the Innovation Awards, after all. Keep to 250 words or less. 30 points

*Paint & Play: A Movable Art Wall for Little Innovators* reimagines outdoor recess as a time for creativity, collaboration, and exploration rather than just physical play. This project is innovative because it transforms a simple, portable structure into a dynamic art experience that encourages hands-on learning in an open environment. Instead of limiting artistic expression to the classroom, this movable wall brings art outdoors—allowing TK and Kindergarten students to paint, mix colors, and create collaboratively while connecting with nature and their peers. It combines elements of STEAM learning by

fostering experimentation, design thinking, and sensory engagement in a playful, low-pressure setting. The wall promotes innovation through flexibility—teachers and staff can reposition it to suit different activities, themes, or group sizes, encouraging adaptive use and ongoing creativity. Beyond its function as an art surface, it becomes a canvas for imagination, communication, and problem-solving. By blending movement, collaboration, and artistic exploration, *Paint & Play* reflects a fresh, forward-thinking approach to early learning—empowering young students to see that innovation can happen anywhere, even during recess.

**•Student Needs:** Explain the reasons why this project is so necessary for your student population. Use data, examples, and passion! Keep to 250 words or less. 10 points

Our Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten students are full of imagination, energy, and curiosity—but many need more opportunities to express themselves creatively and build social-emotional skills in meaningful ways. Recess is an important time for exploration, yet for many young learners, it can be overwhelming or unstructured. *Paint & Play: A Movable Art Wall for Little Innovators* provides an inclusive, engaging option that supports both creative expression and emotional regulation during outdoor play. Research shows that early access to art experiences enhances fine motor skills, problem-solving abilities, and language development, while also reducing stress and improving focus. For our youngest learners—many of whom are still developing self-regulation, communication, and cooperative play skills—this project offers a positive, hands-on outlet to express ideas, share space, and collaborate. It especially benefits students who may struggle with traditional playground activities or need alternative ways to connect with peers. The painting wall transforms recess into a safe, creative environment where every child can participate, explore, and feel successful. By bringing art outdoors, *Paint & Play* meets students where they are—active, curious, and ready to create—supporting whole-child development and laying the foundation for future innovation, confidence, and joy in learning.

**•Standards:** Please, do not only supply the wording of the standards your project addresses. Instead, briefly explain how your project carries them out in narrative form. Be specific. Keep to under 250 words. 10 points

*Paint & Play: A Movable Art Wall for Little Innovators* brings key California Preschool Learning Foundations (PLF) and Common Core Kindergarten Standards to life through creative, play-based outdoor learning. The project aligns with Visual and Performing Arts (VPA) Strand 2.0: Creative Expression, where children “apply artistic processes and skills, using a variety of media to communicate meaning” (PLF VPA 2.1–2.3). By painting collaboratively, students explore color, line, and texture to express ideas and emotions in

original ways. The project also supports Social–Emotional Development (SED) Strand 2: Self-Regulation and Strand 3: Social Interaction, as students practice turn-taking, problem-solving, and expressing feelings appropriately while sharing materials and space (PLF SED 2.1, 3.1). Through cooperative art experiences, they develop empathy and teamwork—core components of both PLF and Common Core Speaking & Listening K.SL.1, which emphasizes collaborative conversations with peers and adults. Language and early literacy are naturally integrated as children discuss their artwork and describe their creative process, aligning with Common Core Language Standard K.L.1–K.L.6 and TK Foundations: Language Development 1.1–1.3. Painting also supports Physical Development Strand 1: Fine Motor Skills (PD 1.1–1.3), strengthening control and coordination needed for writing. Ultimately, Paint & Play turns standards into joyful, hands-on experiences—fostering curiosity, communication, creativity, and confidence while meeting the developmental goals outlined in the PK-TK Learning Framework and Common Core Standards.

•**Project Plan:** Describe in detail how your project will be implemented. It should read similarly to a lesson/project plan with an introduction, implementation timeline, and evaluation. Limit it to 500 words or less. 40 points

**Introduction:**

*Paint & Play: A Movable Art Wall for Little Innovators* will transform outdoor recess into a vibrant hub of creativity and collaboration for Transitional Kindergarten (TK) and Kindergarten students. Using the *Strictly for Kids Two-Sided Outdoor Paint Station*, this project provides a durable, weather-safe, and developmentally appropriate space where children can explore art and innovation through hands-on experiences. The clear panels allow for visibility and supervision while inviting students to experiment with color, shape, and movement in a shared environment that promotes communication, imagination, and self-expression.

**Implementation**

**Timeline:**

**Phase 1 – Preparation:**

- Purchase and install the two-sided outdoor paint wall in a safe, accessible area of the playground.
- Gather washable, non-toxic tempera paints, Kwik Stix, spray bottles filled with water, and squeegees to clean or refresh the painting surfaces between sessions.

- Train staff and volunteers on supervision, cleanup, and how to facilitate cooperative art play during recess.

### **Phase 2 – Introduction:**

- Introduce the Paint & Play wall during recess with small groups. Teachers will model how to use the Kwik Stix, paint, and spray bottles responsibly, as well as how to share space and respect peers' artwork.
- Begin with guided prompts such as “paint your favorite weather” or “make a color pattern” to help students explore tools and techniques.
- Encourage verbal expression by having students describe their artwork and creative choices, supporting language and communication development.

### **Phase 3 – Exploration & Integration:**

- Transition to open-ended sessions where children collaborate freely, mix colors, and explore texture using a variety of tools.
- Incorporate STEAM-based experiences—such as observing what happens when water sprays over paint or using natural materials (like leaves and sticks) to create unique prints.
- Connect art sessions to classroom themes like seasons, community, or emotions, reinforcing cross-curricular learning.

### **Evaluation:**

Teachers will use observation checklists and anecdotal notes to document creativity, communication, and motor skill growth. Student participation rates, feedback, and artwork samples will provide evidence of the project's impact.

### **Sustainability:**

The outdoor paint wall's sturdy, weather-resistant design ensures long-term use with minimal maintenance. With refillable tempera paints, reusable tools, and flexible creative options, *Paint & Play* will remain a lasting tool for outdoor learning and artistic innovation for years to come.

•**Lasting Impact:** Having a lasting impact is not a requirement to receive a grant, however, it is nice to know how this might impact your classroom, the school community, or students for years to come. Limit it to 250 words or less.

*Paint & Play: A Movable Art Wall for Little Innovators* will leave a lasting impression on both students and the school community by redefining how creativity and innovation are experienced during outdoor play. Because students paint directly on the plexiglass panels, each creation becomes a temporary masterpiece—encouraging experimentation, flexibility, and resilience. This process-oriented approach teaches young learners that creativity isn't about a final product, but about exploration, discovery, and joy in the moment.

Over time, the project will cultivate a culture of curiosity and collaboration. The transparent surface naturally invites interaction—students paint on both sides, respond to one another's designs, and communicate through color and motion. This kind of creative dialogue builds empathy, confidence, and social connection in ways that traditional playground equipment cannot.

The Paint & Play wall will also inspire teachers to integrate more open-ended, play-based learning experiences into their routines, reinforcing the importance of art as a vehicle for cognitive and emotional development. Families and the broader school community will see the wall as a symbol of innovation, creativity, and the value of hands-on learning in early education.

Even as each artwork washes away, the lessons it represents—imagination, teamwork, and the freedom to create without limits—will continue to shape students long after their TK and Kindergarten years.

•**Budget:** Use this link to a budget template to fill in a Google Sheet budget and then copy the link to that Google Sheet here. Remember to “share” the document with “anyone with the link”.

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1f1vIEbl\\_xlGTXpLwmqy4S8mvUgMiVPqiuQK-XKwhAkI/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1f1vIEbl_xlGTXpLwmqy4S8mvUgMiVPqiuQK-XKwhAkI/edit?usp=sharing)