

Weave a Paper Thanksgiving Placemat

Many first grade classrooms will include curriculum on the meaning of the Thanksgiving, and of giving thanks at the table. This is part of a core social studies goal of helping your child become familiar with the community where she lives, and with the rhythm of the year. At the same time, the early part of the year will extend early kindergarten work in creating patterns as a pathway to math, and in doing hands-on tasks as a pathway to writing. Here's an activity that encourages all three kinds of learning ... and can also make a beautiful addition to your Thanksgiving table.

What You Need:

- Large (12x18") construction paper in fall colors
- Scissors
- Clear contact paper or a laminator

What You Do:

1. Fold one piece of construction paper in half horizontally. Starting at the fold, make parallel line cuts in the paper, 1 inch apart, leaving a 1-inch border at the edge. You can cut straight, or we especially recommend doing curvy lines. Just make sure that you leave at least 1" at the ends of the cuts.
2. Take a piece of construction paper in a contrasting color, and cut it horizontally to make strips 1" wide and 12" high.
3. Help your child weave the strips over and under to create a "placemat" for the table. If this is your child's first weaving experience, you'll probably want to start just with over/under alternating strips. But as soon as your child is comfortable, encourage variations: curvy lined placemats, placemats with more than one contrasting color; or designs in which a child develops a weaving "pattern" with, say, a strip that goes "over two" and "under one."
4. When your child is finished, seal off the design by placing it between layers of contact paper, or run it through a laminator. You have created a protective table placemat that can be used again and again...while giving your child practice in those key first grade math and social studies skills.

