



Children's Cottage Crisis Nursery,

Age 0-4

The concept, "Bug's eye view of the World," has been transformed into the unique "Nathan Town," integrating art, design, and decoration skills to create a distinctive and interactive mural. The focal point of this endeavor includes textured pieces and two large mushrooms emerging from the walls, with their umbrella caps opened on the ceiling to evoke a sense of safety, shielding children from imaginary rain/sun.

It is proven fact that young children, especially those under the age of 5, can experience psychological distress when separated from their primary caregivers, who are typically their parents. This distress is often rooted in the strong attachment and bonding that develops between infants and young children and their primary caregivers and serves as a source of comfort, security, and love for the child.

When children are temporarily placed in the Crisis Nursery, they feel a sense of separation anxiety and emotional distress due to the unfamiliar environment and absence of their familiar attachment figures. Nursery personnel must provide emotional support, comfort, and reassurance to help ease the child's distress during their stay.

We had a goal to create an interactive mural that will function as the one of the tools that engage and distract the child positively, contribute to reducing their psychological distress during the temporary separation and bring out the positive and happy emotions in the child at the same time making children feel welcome.

This mural fundamentally differs from the classically approached murals you see in other public places as our goal is to make children feel safe and welcome as we implemented some elements of the Sensory room.

Our plot began with creation of the open blue-sky perspective with clouds on the ceiling that naturally connected with an outside view of the sky by large windows in the room. The sky and clouds can have various effects on children's psychology, influencing their mood, creativity, and overall well-being. Sunlight helps stimulate the production of serotonin, a neurotransmitter associated with feelings of well-being and happiness. While cloudy days may lack the brightness of sunny days, they can create a calm, comforting and cozy atmosphere. Children often enjoy looking at clouds and identifying shapes. This activity encourages creativity and imagination as they try to find recognizable forms in the clouds.

Using bright, fun, and warm colors in environments that involve children was a well-considered approach. Our designs made the Nursery more engaging and interesting for children. It allows for personalization and encourages creativity. Colors can have a significant impact on mood and psychology, and using cheerful and vibrant colors tends to create a positive and stimulating atmosphere. We explicitly avoided dark or somber colors as they associated with gloominess or sadness. By avoiding these tones, we minimized the risk of triggering negative emotions in children.

All heroes in the mural use open and welcoming body language who when interacting with small children, it can help create a sense of safety and comfort. Open palms and waving are a friendly and non-threatening gesture. It signals a greeting and invites a positive response from the child. Playing or listening to musical instruments can be both entertaining and captivating for children. The use of open hands while playing instruments conveys a sense of joy and encourages a playful atmosphere. Holding items that are familiar and recognized by children, as flowers, balloons, or a purse, can create a connection. Making eye contact and smiling are powerful non-verbal cues that communicate warmth and friendliness. These signals can help build trust and a positive emotional connection. That is why all our characters have large happy eyes and big smiles.

We used some creative and symbolic elements, such as drawing of four beetles climbing up. This is another powerful way to convey positive messages to children. The symbolism of climbing beetles is a creative and imaginative way to instill a sense of hope, determination, and the belief that there is always a way forward. The act of climbing suggests overcoming obstacles and challenges. It sends a message that, no matter how difficult a situation may seem, with effort and persistence, one can move forward. The act of climbing can symbolize the search for solutions and the ability to navigate through difficulties. It encourages a problem-solving mindset in children. As well climbing beetles empowers children by suggesting that they have the ability to take action and control their circumstances. It encourages a sense of agency and self-efficacy.

Our Mural consists of many interactive elements that spark imagination in children, engages their creativity, encourages exploration, and fosters cognitive development. The scenario with mushroom homes and the opportunity for children to imagine the lives of imaginary characters like an ant family is educational. Knocking on doors and imagining the residents inside allows children to create and explore their own narratives. Children engage in imaginative play, make decisions about the characters, and create stories, enhancing their cognitive skills. Encouraging children to discuss and share their ideas about the imaginary residents of the mushroom homes promotes social interaction. It can be an opportunity for collaborative play, where children build on each other's narratives. Imaginary play often involves verbal communication. Children might use language to describe the characters, their roles, and the relationships within the imaginary world, supporting language development.

We incorporated some texture into the mural that children can touch and explore. This adds a sensory dimension to the interactive experience.

The ant family scenario introduces educational themes such as family structures, counting, and basic biology. Children can guess the number of ant family members, their roles, and even learn about the life of ants in a playful manner. Two mischievous-looking worms could be on a quest to find new friends.

We added an extra layer of engagement and fun for children. A disappearing corner is a visual trick that adds an interactive and dynamic element to the mural. When standing across the corner and rocking slowly from side to side looking at the 2 doors, you will see that steps begin to move, and corner vanishes. That will captivate the attention of the children and catalyzing discussions that prompt the question "WHY?" This can not only captivate the child's imagination but also encourage meaningful interactions with adults.

We consulted with the most important Experts, 3 to 5 years olds and received a glowing review indicating that the room and mural are resonating positively with the target audience. Alagir Art Design Team set a goal and created an environment that captures the imagination and joy of young children.