

A Letter to Families about Art

Dear Families,

Art is an important part of our curriculum. Every day, children find a variety of art materials available on our shelves. Drawing, painting, pasting, molding, and constructing are not only enjoyable but also provide opportunities for learning. Children express their ideas and feelings, improve their coordination, learn to recognize colors and textures, and develop creativity and pride in their accomplishments by exploring and using art materials.

When children are engaged in art activities, we talk with them about what they are doing and ask questions that encourage them to think about their ideas and express feelings.

We are just as interested in the creative process as we are in what children make. We say things that will encourage children to be creative and confident, such as

“Tell me about your picture” (instead of “Is that a house you drew?”)

“It looks like the play dough is sticking to your fingers. What could we do to make it less sticky?”

What You Can Do at Home

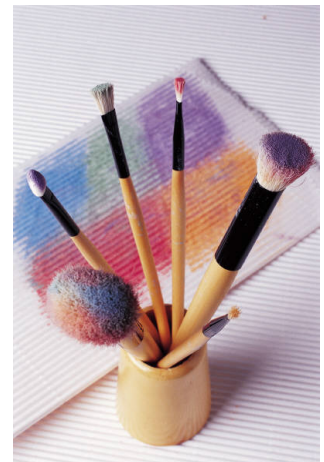
Art is a very easy way to bring your child’s school life into your home. Children love to share their art projects with the most important people in their lives. Take time to talk with your child. Here are some things you might say and ask:

“Tell me about your picture.”

“How did you decide which colors to use?”

“What do you like best about it?”

“Should we hang it up in a special place so we can enjoy your work?”



You can help your child appreciate art right in your home. When you look at books together, talk about the illustrations with your child. Discuss the art in your home.

Art is something your child can do at home in almost any room. You might designate a drawer in the kitchen or living room as an art drawer; use a bookshelf or sturdy cardboard box. Include crayons, markers, paper, a pair of child sized blunt-edged scissors, glues, and a separate box for collage materials. Your child is much more creative and artistic than any coloring book allows!

What Children Learn Through Art



Literacy

Promote knowledge of print by having your child sign their name on their pictures, or post their names next to sculptures, mobiles, and assemblages. With their permission, write a description of their work directly on their artwork or on an accompanying card.

Mathematics

Introduce your child to number concepts by pointing out that many artists both sign and number their prints; help children develop an understanding. Help your child develop an understanding of one-to-one correspondence as they place one paintbrush in each paint pot or replace a cap on each marker.

Encourage your child to observe patterns in art, such as stripes or alternating shapes. Challenge them to make patterns as they use stencils or sponge paint a border.

Invite your child to explore geometry and spatial sense as they use three-dimensional shapes in sculpting and construction. Talk to them about their paintings; use positional words – over, under, inside, next to- as you talk to children about their creations.

Science

Introduce your child to physical science by conducting experiments with different art media. As they add water to clay or mix paints together, encourage them to observe changes. Talk about balance while building a sculpture or creating a mobile.

Teach your child about life science by having them incorporate leaves and flowers collected on a nature walk into their art. Bring living things – plants and animals – to the art area for them to observe and draw.

Increase their awareness of Earth and the environment by having them observe the use of shadow in fine art and then trace their friend's shadows in chalk while playing outdoors. Create art with natural materials such as clay, sand, dirt, and water.

Social Studies

Encourage your child to learn about people and how they live by drawing, painting, and sculpting the people and things in their world.

How Art Promotes Development and Learning

Social-Emotional

Art is a vehicle for children to express their ideas and feelings. Children reflect their thoughts and emotions through their choices of color, texture, and media. For example, when happy or excited, a child might use bright colors. When sad or upset, a child may choose darker tones. Children also express their originality and individuality in their art. Who says the pumpkins they paint have to be orange? A child may prefer having a purple one simply because it will stand out better in a patch.

Physical

Art involves fine-motor skills. As children tear paper for a collage or use scissors to cut, they refine small-muscle movements. Making lines and shapes with markers and crayons or hitting a nail on the head with a hammer are activities that help children develop fine-motor control they need for writing.

Language

Children often talk about what they are doing and respond to questions about their creations as they engage in art. Teachers can write down what children say about their artwork as a permanent record of the experience. Art also fosters vocabulary as children learn and use related technical vocabulary: *sculpture*, *palette*, and *clamp*, to name just a few terms.

Cognitive

Children draw, paint, and sculpt what they know. As they translate their ideas and feelings into art, they use thinking skills to plan, organize, select media, and represent their impressions. When children draw, paint, and make collages, they experiment with color, line, shape, and size. Using paints, fabrics, and woodworking tools they make choices, try new ideas, plan, and experiment. They learn about cause and effect when they mix colors. Through trial and error, they learn how to balance mobiles and weave yarn.



Creating an Environment for Art

It is easy to create an inviting area in the home that inspires children's creativity and self-expression.

Find a space within your child's bedroom, playroom or in the kitchen that can be designated for art. If the area is in a carpeted space, purchase a small area rug to cover the carpet from spills and stains. You can use rails to hang all of their crayons/pencils etc. on, as well as some wire & pegs to hang their artwork from. Chalkboard paint can be found at the local Home Depot and will turn any wall into a place to create art.



Grange sales and second hand shops are a great way to find child size desks, tables, and chairs that can be used to create a surface for your little one to create and design on. Once you find a surface that you want to use, add a bar at the end to hold paper.

Inexpensive old picture frames are easy to find and a great way to display your child's masterpieces in their art space. To create a cohesive look with different size frames, paint all of them the same color so they

match.

Remember, if the area is inviting, your child will be drawn to the art materials kept there, but if the art area looks messy, overwhelming, or barren, your child is not likely to be attracted to it.

