



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREATIVITY

Art is one activity in which almost all children will readily take part. Some are methodical in their process and others bulldoze through activities. Some mix colors for hours without ever touching paint to paper, while others insist on having a picture to take home every day. Some carefully roll up their sleeves, others will "wear" the project home.

Through their creative experiences, children develop small motor skills, awareness of design and color and manipulation of texture. Over a period of time such experiences develop: understanding of cause and effect, the use of symbols to represent a person or idea and increased coordination.

Additionally, young children need to have the opportunity to express awareness of, and feeling about, themselves and their environment. Long before they are well skilled in language, art allows young children to express themselves.

What can you do at home?

1. Save cleanup and "peace of mind" time. Find a well-ventilated, protected area in your home, backyard or garage. Lay down an old shower curtain or a cheap tablecloth to catch any spills. Allow for both indoor and outdoor experiences when possible. An adult-sized button-up shirt worn backwards will protect most of the front of a

young artist from spills. Both ground cover and shirt can be thrown in the washer before stains set or be left to dry stained. Near your art area you may wish to place towels and a plastic dishpan filled with soapy water. When art time is over, cleanup is



only a step away. A wooden, folding clothes rack with clothespins will serve as a good place to hang "wet" projects while they dry. Plastic plates from microwavable dinners make good glue/paint trays. Empty bubble soap bottles make good storage containers for used glue/paint.



2. Keep set-up simple!

You want an art area that lends itself to multiple art activities such as pasting, cutting, painting and sculpting. A sturdy, child size table with chairs is a good investment. Keep art supplies in one place, preferably near your art area.

3. Allow access to supplies for every day art. For younger children, keep a few supplies where they can reach them such as paper, crayons and stencils. For older children, you may add scissors, paste and accessories such as pipe cleaners, buttons and feathers.

4. Supplies requiring adult supervision should be kept out of reach.

This includes both supplies that could be harmful, as well as supplies which often "drive you crazy." If stepping in little Playdough balls left on the rug drives you to migraines, keep the Playdough out of reach until you have time to supervise its' use.

5. Allow children the time and space to store prolonged projects and determine when they are finished. During self-directed art, children make the decision as to when a project is complete. Find an accessible, safe place where your child's "artwork in progress" can be stored when it is not being worked on.

Finally, display artwork at different heights so that art is visible to both children and adults.