

One Page Resource: Process Versus Product Art

Art is an essential aspect of all PreK classrooms. Four and five year olds express their creativity through their artwork and it is our job as PreK teachers to help facilitate this process. Children receive many benefits from participating in art experiences such as developing their fine motor skills, learning to write, experimenting with shapes, colors and learning to express themselves creatively. Art experiences help children to represent their thoughts and ideas about the world around them. When teachers are planning art experiences it is important to remember to emphasize the process that children will go through as they are creating. This is much more important than the finished product of the experience. Children's artwork should be individualized by giving children many choices, providing a variety of materials for children to use and giving them the opportunity to use their creative ideas as opposed to using a model.

Here are some ideas on how to maximize the benefits that children receive when participating in art:



Teachers can:

- Be intentional in planning for art experiences and observe for many of the Essential Indicators as children engage in activities
- Encourage children to explore materials as they create their artwork
- Use recyclable materials to stock your art area
- Remember that there does not always have to be a finished product when creating artwork
- Allow children access to all materials in the art area during self-selection
- Give children the choice of the materials they get to use when creating artwork (ex: markers, crayons or paint) or the topic on which they are creating (ex: a child chose to paint the sun)
- Encourage children to create individualized artwork
- Allow children to choose the colors of paint or drawing utensil when creating artwork
- Have open ended discussion about children's work and document their responses. Ask children "Can you tell me about it?" and use descriptive language like "interesting," or "colorful"
- Avoid making judgments about children's artwork. Avoid questions like "What is it?" or telling children "It's pretty"
- Value the uniqueness of each child's creative work and avoid projects where all children's work looks the same
- Give children long blocks of time to work with art materials. At times children may need to revisit their work the next day
- Avoid using copied pictures to create art experiences or giving children model projects to copy
- Remember to accept children's unconventional use of materials and model different ways for children to explore materials

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New Mexico Best Practices, 1999