

One Page Resource: We are all explorers – Creative Expression through Art

Regardless of material or technique, there are no wrong ways to express yourself through art. In Early Childhood it is important and appropriate to focus on the **process of creating rather than on the result** – Process Art not Product Art! Young children learn best by exploring and investigating through developmentally appropriate hands on, open-ended experiences in supportive, organized and creative environments.

“The arts provide an inner sense of competence and control. For all children the arts open up new avenues for expression and communication.” The Intention Teacher by Ann S. Epstein

● Tips for a Successful Art Area...

Location and Storage - close to a sink if possible, easy to clean and with some space to spread out. Provide organized, effective storage for the art supplies. Be sure materials are accessible for children, placed on a lower shelf so they can reach them.

Show the children what materials are available and how to use them. Encourage children to care for the materials, providing support when necessary. Explain how to clean paint brushes and store them without giving them a “bad hair day.” Show children how to sign their work; either on the art work itself, with “post-its,” or sign the back. Talk with the children about their work - see below

● Positive ways to talk to the children about their Art...

Think about the materials you regularly use - check below to see if there are other materials in these lists that you don't usually use and could experiment with. Be intentional about the experience you continue to offer the children. Remember to vary the surface, tools and settings. What we want for young children is to explore and express themselves while having fun using rich, good quality and varied materials.

Teachers need to experiment - Try to have a **moment of fun** with a colleague to test the materials and see what you can do with them. This helps you to be better informed about the materials and how they work together, how to organize them and what problems may be anticipated when the children start to explore.

Art Materials:

The painting surface: Some ideas include...an easel or table inside and/or outside...hanging an easel on the fence outside...making an easel out of plexiglass with space for 2+ children to paint next to each other...put paper on pieces of wood; bubble wrap; cardboard

Drawing: Items to include may be...Markers –thick and fine (regular colored and permanent marker) pens, regular and colored pencils, crayons, chalk, pastels, charcoal, twigs, paint brushes - Keep this fresh, and change it frequently!

Painting: Vary materials often, choose some of these...Tempera paint; water colors in cakes or in a liquid; finger-paints; Liquid starch and soap flakes (to thicken the tempera paint); brushes in varieties of sizes and textures; tools to make marks (combs, toothbrushes, sticks, leaves, cotton swabs, string, shoelaces, rubber bands, bottle tops); containers to hold the paint -paper cups, muffin tins, empty food containers (plastic or glass-baby food jars are good for holding watercolor liquid), plates, metal trays, yogurt lids, buckets; Containers to hold the water – plastic jars , clear glass jars (work well, as children can watch the water change color); No mess painting-a bucket of water & paint brushes for painting outside.

Paper: White drawing paper; large roll of butcher or craft paper; variety of color in construction paper, lined paper; graph paper; finger-paint paper (glossy coating); shelving paper; clear and colored cellophane; newsprint; magazines and catalogs; cardboard and mat board (framing shops); all kinds of paper bags; gift wrapping and tissue paper; foil paper; cardboard and shoe boxes; corrugated packing material; paper plates; bubble wrap; leaves or any recycled material that can be drawn or painted on.

Positive ways to talk to the children about their art:

- Describe what you see in their art... “I see lots of lines-tell me about them.”
 - Describe the child's process
- Use Open-ended questions....
 - * “What do you suppose would happen if you....(mixed the paints)? How did you make that color/line?”
 - * “What made you decide to use the water colors today? Can you tell me how you did that?”
 - *Give information to the children without giving the solution: “You could try”....or “See what happens if...”
 - * “Do you want to tell me about your piece, I could write down your words.”
 - *Try to avoid saying - “It's beautiful.” “That's pretty.” and “Good job.”