

A Letter to Families About Art

Dear families,

Paper, paint, glue, yarn, clay, scissors, brushes, markers, crayons—everyone knows that these are the materials of self-expression and creativity for preschool-aged children.

But did you know that creating art also supports content learning, cognitive development, language development, and physical development? In creating just one work of art, a child explores color, shape, and texture. He recalls past events or invents new experiences, which he represents on paper or through sculpture. He makes decisions and carries them out. He does all of these things while building the small muscles in his fingers and hands and improving his hand–eye coordination.

When you visit our classroom, ask your child to show you the many original pieces of art on display here. Meanwhile, you can support the many benefits of the artistic process and art appreciation—not only in your home, but also in the places you go as a family.

What You Can Do at Home

- Give your child a place at home to display her artwork, preferably at her eye level. If you are lucky enough to receive more of your child’s creations than you have room to display, let her be the curator of her own work. Ask, “Which of these would you like to hang up? Would you like to replace that one with this one?”
- Set up a place at home for your child to create art. If the spot is indoors, make sure it is easy to keep clean. Think particularly about furniture surfaces and floor coverings. If your child does make a mess, use it as teaching opportunity. Remember that your reaction to your child’s mistakes will have as much impact on her development as your reaction to her successes.
- Take art creation outside! Sidewalk chalk, buckets of water with various sizes of paintbrushes, finger paints, clay, and small pieces of wood are all excellent materials for outdoor art.
- Whenever you go with your child, be on the lookout for art. Museums have art, of course, but so do streets, churches, stores, and restaurants. There are so many places you might visit with your family that display works of art! Draw your child’s attention to the art you notice in your environment. Ask your child how she thinks it was made and what the artist might have been thinking at the time.