

Sharing Thoughts About Art Experiences

Dear Families:

When you think about art experiences, do you imagine a child with crayons or a paint brush in hand? Painting and drawing are just two of the many ways young children enjoy art. In fact, art experiences begin early in life as a baby enjoys stroking the fringe on her blanket or finger paints with the blob of yogurt that falls on her tray. As they get older, they enjoy scribbling with a crayon and squeezing play dough with their hands. Art experiences allow children to have wonderful sensory experiences and to experiment with a variety of materials. They also help children develop thinking and physical skills. Here are some examples.

When your child does this...

- covers paper with paint
- pokes a hole in play dough
- tears paper for a collage
- uses paste successfully

Your child is learning...

- about cause and effect
- how objects can be used
- eye-hand coordination
- to solve a problem

What You Can Do at Home

Young children like to explore and experiment with art materials. They are more interested in feeling, seeing, smelling, tasting, and controlling tools and materials than in making something. Here are some ideas for offering art experiences at home.

- **Offer your baby different textures to explore.** Place a basket with a collection of different fabrics near your child and encourage her to play with them. Talk about how they feel.
- **Make simple art materials together.** You can make play dough for your child to squeeze and pound, or make Goop for another wonderful sensory experience. We have several recipes for making art materials that we'll be glad to share with you.
- **Keep plain paper and crayons available for your toddler.** Encourage your child to draw freely and to experiment. Do not expect her to draw something you will be able to recognize.
- **Encourage your child to use art materials freely.** For young children, the process of creating is important, not the finished product. Show your interest in what your child is doing by describing his actions: "You made lots of different marks on the paper. These are round circles, and these are lines."

Together, we can give your child the kinds of experiences that encourage exploration and an appreciation of art.

Sincerely,