

The Part of Art That's From the Heart

John Funk
Excelligence Learning Corp
jfunk@excelligencemail.com

The Art Process

“Children should have daily opportunities for aesthetic expression and appreciation through art...a variety of art media should be available for creative expression, such as easel and finger painting and clay. Art...(is) integrated throughout each day as relevant to the curriculum and as needed for children to express themselves aesthetically and physically and to express ideas and feelings.” (1)

1. Art is an expression of the human spirit. Children feel ownership when their ‘project’ reflects *their* interests.
2. Art should be available so students can express their feelings in non-verbal ways.
3. A good program should provide for spontaneous, as well as planned, art activities. Always allow for choices. Even during teacher-planned activities, allow the children some flexibility. The atmosphere should be one that encourages creativity. Art projects do not always need a “theme.” Creativity should be fostered even in “theme” art projects.
4. It is important for children to have freedom to make choices and to express and organize their thoughts. Encourage independence. Unless safety is an issue, allow children to work on art projects without constant supervision.
5. If a child is not satisfied with his/her first attempt, allow the child to try again. Do not inhibit experimentation and planning by limiting the child to one attempt.
6. Try to allow as much time as needed for children to finish a project. Continue the project the next day, if necessary. Children will concentrate more on the process when they can control the time element.
7. Remember to encourage and accept the child’s artwork, regardless of his/her developmental stage. *The child should be the only judge of his/her artwork.*
8. Patterned art coloring dittos do not allow for the development and creativity and in fact can harm a child’s creative abilities. “Research shows that more than half of all children exposed to coloring books lose their creativity and independence of expression.” Victor Lowenfeld (2)



9. When adding dictated dialogue to a project, do not write on a child’s project without his/her permission. You may need to write the dialogue on another piece of paper or on the back.

10. Don't worry about mess. People tend to create out of what some might see as chaos. Art centers and children are washable. In fact cleaning can be a great social experience.
11. Children can practice many thinking skills during art. Organization, planning and creativity can be taught/observed during appropriate art projects. Fine motor skills can also be enhanced by proper art activities.
12. A wise teacher concentrates on the *process* of art activities and **NOT** on the final product. Emphasis should be placed on discovering what can be created with the materials provided and not copy an existing example.



1. Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Early Childhood Classroom, NAEYC, 1997.
2. Kindergarten and Early School, Dorothy Cohen and Margueta Rudolph, 1984.
Art in the Early Childhood Classroom, John Funk, SRA/McGraw-Hill, 1996.

Art Center Suggestions

Purpose

- To provide children with opportunities to discover line, color, shape, and texture by seeing and feeling objects.
- To provide opportunities for children to express their thoughts and ideas through simple media.
- To provide children with opportunities to develop an understanding and appreciation of themselves and others through art culture and heritage.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

Paints	Glue/paste
Stamps	Stamp pads
Paintbrushes	Scissors
Clay	Straw
Easels	Crayons, markers
Aprons	Chalk
Blank paper	Colored paper (construction)
Ribbon/yarn	Glitter
Pipe cleaners	Paper bags
Fabric scraps	Magazines
Craft sticks	Wrapping paper
Cotton balls	Watercolors
Sponges	Tempera paint cakes
Paper plates	



Basic Art Dough

Basic Art Dough

4 cups flour
1 cup iodized salt
1 ¾ cups warm water
bowl

PROCESS

1. Mix all ingredients in bowl.
2. Knead 10 minutes.
3. Model as with any clay.
4. Bake 300 degrees until hard
5. Or air dry for few days.



Quick Modeling Dough

1 cup cold water
1 cup salt
2 t. oil
3 cups flour
2 T. cornstarch
powdered paint (food coloring)

PROCESS

1. Mix the water, salt, oil, and enough powdered paint to make a bright color.
2. Gradually work flour and cornstarch in until it has the consistency of bread dough.
3. Knead.
4. Model as with any clay.

GAK Recipe

2 cups glue
2 level tsp. Borax soap
1 ½ cups water
1 cup hot water
Food coloring



Combine glue, 1 ½ cup water, and coloring in small bowl.

In large bowl, dissolve soap in 1 cup hot water.

Slowly add glue mixture to soap mixture. Mixture will quickly coagulate and will be a little difficult to mix.

After mixing well, pour off excess water. Let stand for another 5 minutes. It's ready to use! When not in use, store in Ziploc bag. GAK will last longer if used with clean hands.

Seasonal Art Suggestions

In working with an open Art Center and encouraging creativity and expression, there are activities and materials that coincide with seasonal activities. Following is a list of some suggestions for enhancing the early childhood Art Center during different seasons of the year.



Fall

Leaf Glitter

Put dry leaves in the Art Center and let the children crumble them up and glue them on their art projects, just like regular glitter. This adds a touch of autumn to their pictures.

Collages

Fall is a great time to create collages. Tissue paper in fall colors (orange, yellow, red, brown, and so on) makes excellent collages. Sponge painting with tempera paint in fall colors can also make beautiful pictures. These collages can be enjoyed for their own beauty, or they can be used as background for other projects.

Branch Painting

Gather twigs or small branches to use as paintbrushes. Have the children dip the twigs or small branches in thick paint and use them to paint on art paper. Using fall colors of paint gives the children's projects a special autumn twist.



Leaf Characters

Early in the fall, have the children gather fallen leaves. (The leaves should still be fairly soft early in the fall.) Put the leaves between sheets of newspaper and place them under a heavy object, such as a book. The children can use the pressed leaves to make leaf creatures. Draw attention to the fact that leaves have certain shapes and can represent other things (animals, people, space creatures, and so on). Have children glue the leaves onto art paper and draw any additional body parts their leaf creature may need.

Painted Leaves

Use large fall leaves for this activity. Allow the children to use cotton swabs dipped in tempera paint or eyedroppers with food coloring and add more color to the leaves. This will give the leaves a subtle color change. These painted leaves can be enjoyed for their own beauty or used for collages or leaf pictures.

Leaf Prints

Collect fall leaves for the Art Center. Have the children paint the back of a leaf with one or more colors of paint. Press the leaf onto construction paper or newsprint to make a leaf print. The children can use different colors and different leaves to continue their project.

Paper Bag Pictures

The tan color of paper bags makes an excellent background for any autumn picture. Cut the bags into workable shapes and sizes, place in the Art Center, and allow the children to CREATE!

Sponge Painting

Sponges cut into leaf shapes can be used to create many different autumn art pictures or backgrounds for pictures and projects. Sponges can be used to create fall trees even when the sponges are not cut into leaf shapes. Provide plenty of tempera paint in fall colors and allow the children to use the sponges freely.

Fall Finger Painting

Have the children finger paint with brown paint on a sheet of finger paint paper. After the pictures dry, let children make fingerprints or handprints with fall colors (red, yellow, green and so on) on the brown background. This can create some very beautiful fall designs and pictures.

WINTER



Let the White Paint Flow

Always have PLENTY of white paint in the Art Center during the winter months, even if the classroom is in a moderate climate that does not usually experience snow. Children equate snow with winter. They love to paint snow and snowflakes all over their papers. This works particularly well on dark-colored paper.

Try watering down the white paint to give art projects an opaque effect. Another fun addition to white paint for winter pictures is sand. Add a little white sand to one of the paint posts to give a textured feeling to the painted projects.

Allow the children to do some white printmaking with different utensils. Again, it works better on dark-colored paper.

Snowflakes

Children enjoy making paper snowflakes out of folded paper. Instruct children how to fold and cut snowflakes shapes. After the initial instruction, let the children expand on the instructions and create their own snowflake art.

Epsom Salts Art

Epsom salts is a fun additive to winter art projects. After creating pictures, have the children spread a thin layer of glue over their pictures. Then have them shake Epsom salts out of a large shaker over the glue. The Epsom salts gives the illusion of snow. The salts shake off whenever the pictures are rubbed, which makes an even more exciting picture.

Epsom salts may also be used for painting a picture. Mix an equal amount of Epsom salts and water and cook over low heat until the mixture boils. Allow the mixture to cool. Let the children paint with the mixture on dark construction paper. When the pictures dry, they look very “snowy.”

Coffee Filter Snowflakes



Coffee filters are easy to use to make different types of snowflakes. Have the children fold and cut the filters into many shapes. They can also cut and glue other materials or papers onto the filters.

Rainbow colors make a fun addition to coffee filter snowflakes. After the snowflakes have been made, place them flat on paper towels. Using eyedroppers, drop diluted food coloring onto the snowflakes. When hung in the window or by a light, they create a rainbow of snow.

Stained Glass Windows

Winter is a fun time to add a little color to the classroom with stained glass window art. Mix thick tempera paint with a small amount of liquid detergent. Cover the wall or floor area around a window with newspaper for protection. Use masking tape to define a space on the window for each child. Allow children to

take turns painting directly on the window inside the defined area. Remove the tape when all the painting is done and fill in the tapelines with dark paint, if desired.

Finger-Painted Backgrounds

Allow children to finger-paint on large pieces of finger paint paper, preferably with white or light blue paint. Use this as a background for a winter picture make with cutout or torn construction paper shapes.

Sugar Water Drawing

Dissolve three tablespoons of sugar in a small baby food jar filled with lukewarm water. You may need to prepare several jars of sugar water. Have the children dip chalk in the sugar water and draw pictures on art paper. The children will need to dip the chalk repeatedly. When dry, the pictures will sparkle with crystallized sugar. This is a fun addition to winter pictures.

Glue Design Pictures

Mix tempera paint or food coloring with glue and place in squeeze bottles. (Prepare containers with several different-colored glues. When the glue has dried, have the children fill in the empty spaces in the picture with paint, crayons, or chalk.



SPRING

Crepe Paper Blossoms

Small pieces of crepe or tissue paper make great blossoms on spring trees. The children can twist these pieces and glue them onto their pictures. This will give a three-dimensional look to their projects. Children can also paper-punch dots out of construction paper and use them as blossom buds. Green crepe or tissue paper can be added to the pictures for grass and leaf buds.

Eggshell Art

Break the shell of colored, hardboiled eggs into tiny pieces and use them like glitter on spring pictures.

Spring Collage

Have children create collages using tissue paper. After they are dry, use the collages like construction paper. Have the children cut out objects and parts of spring pictures from their collages and glue them onto colored construction or butcher paper. This activity will give a fresh look to spring pictures.

Spring Gathering

Take the children on a nature walk and have them gather several items from the environment (twigs, leaves, grass, and so on). Bring the items back to the classroom and have the children use them to create spring art projects. Make sure the children understand that they may also other items to enhance their artwork.

Baby Animal Parade

Cotton balls make excellent baby animals. You can purchase colored cotton balls or color your own by shaking white cotton balls in a plastic bag with a small amount of tempera paint. With these cotton balls, children can create baby birds in their nest, baby lambs in a field, baby kittens in a basket, and so forth.

Spring Shapes

Spring is a good time to paint out the different shapes in the environment. Go on a nature walk and look for shapes. After the walk, have the children cut out some of the shapes they noticed. These shapes can be used

to create pictures or placed under paper to make crayon rubbings. Rubbings can be a very interesting beginning to a spring art project.



SUMMER

Sidewalk Art

Summer is a good time to “paint the sidewalk.” Simply take buckets of water and paintbrushes outside and allow the children to paint water pictures on the sidewalk. They can watch their pictures disappear as the water evaporates, then paint some more!

Summer Bugs

Insects can inspire many art projects. You may want to collect a few insects and allow the children to examine them under a magnifying glass before beginning an art project. Paint, construction paper, crepe paper and tissue paper can all be used to create insects of different sizes, shapes, and colors.

The children may also want to create three-dimensional projects or sculptures of insects.

Leaf Rubbings

Collect a few summer leaves for leaf rubbings. Large leaves make especially good rubbings for young children.

Car Tracks

Pour tempera paint over a sponge (or paper towel). Prepare several sponges with different colors. Have the children roll cars across the tempera-soaked sponges and then roll the cars on art paper to create colored track designs that can lap and overlap.

Summer Sponge Art

Sponge art is fun in the summer because just about anything, including flower gardens, trees, and mountains, can be created. Always make sure that there are plenty of vivid colors to brighten up the art that is being created.

Summer Sculptures

It is fun to do summer sculptures of flowers and other nature items. Prepare a ball of Play-Doh for each child in the class. Have the children form the Play-Dough into base. Stick several pipe cleaners into the base and have the children create flowers, insects, and so on to glue onto the ends of the pipe cleaners. After the Play-Dough dries, the sculptures can be used to create a summer garden.

Art in the Early Childhood Classroom, John Funk, SRA/McGraw-Hill, 1996.