



Art for the Experience

Toddlers are learning and growing every day. Teachers have the privilege of helping to inspire them to explore as much of their environment with as many of their senses as possible. When caregivers encourage young children to bravely approach new experiences, children use these skills for the rest of their lives. Toddlers love art. Spaces where toddlers live often resemble caveman dwellings with stories told on the walls at children's level. They are naturally drawn to using their hands while exploring cause and effect. When supplied freely with developmentally appropriate materials, toddlers reveal volumes of what they feel, what they have learned, and what they are curious about. When teachers plan for art activities they should ask themselves, "What skills are the children going to build while exploring these materials?" What should be least important is the finished project. When planning art activities, the following guide can be useful to keep caregivers on track by providing developmentally appropriate experiences for children. While planning:

- Provide children with safe materials that meet their developmental needs
- Provide children with materials that are meaningful to them
- Set goals and objectives for individual children. For example, one child may need to work on holding a crayon while another is working on drawing a person. Providers may meet both of their needs by supplying them with crayons and blank white paper to draw on.
- Be sure that children's interests and abilities are the focus.

Child focused and developmentally appropriate art activities/projects:

- Are open-ended. There is not a right or wrong way for the product to look. There should not be a finished product or model that children should be producing. If the goal is to have children represent what to them is a tree, when they are finished each piece should look unique and not alike.
- Should include minimal teacher preparation, such as cutting out shapes and pieces for the children to put together. To draw children into the art area and avoid having a finished product in mind, caregivers can provide a wide variety of developmentally appropriate materials that appeal to all kinds of learners. A tree can be formed using paper and crayons, playdoh, glue and wood pieces or cardboard tubes or pipe cleaners.
- Have the process of making the art as the main emphasis, not the product.
- Encourage children to explore materials without needing adult help.



**Art
belongs
where
children
are**