

ART TO HEART TRAINING: 8 Arts at Home: Visual Arts PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

Welcome to this Parent Session on Visual Arts at home. In this session, we'll explore the value of visual arts activities in the lives of young children and how you can encourage and support the young artist in your life.

This session is part of the Art to Heart Training Series, based on an award-winning national public television series entitled *Art to Heart: Early Childhood Creativity*. The television series was produced by KET (Kentucky Educational Television) and includes eight half-hour programs for parents and caregivers about the importance of arts activities from birth to age 8.

To find out more about *Art to Heart*, visit www.ket.org/arttoheart.

Art to Heart Training Series

This training series was developed by KET (Kentucky Educational Television) and the University of Kentucky Human Development Institute. Funding for its development was provided by the Kentucky Department of Education using KIDS NOW funds from the proceeds of the Master Tobacco Settlement and by the W. Paul and Lucille Caudill Little Arts Endowment for KET.

The *Art to Heart: Early Childhood Creativity* television series was produced by KET with support from the W. Paul and Lucille Caudill Little Arts Endowment for KET and the National Endowment for the Arts.



WHAT IS VISUAL ART?

Visual art is all around us. Here are some of the forms of visual art and materials used by children for each:

- collage and construction (paper, wood, fabric, materials from nature)
- drawing and rubbings (crayons, colored pencils, markers, chalk, pastels)
- painting (finger paint, tempera, water color)
- sculpture (clay, play dough, paper, papier-mache, ceramics, wood)
- printmaking (rubber stamps)
- photography and video

Visual Arts in Your Life

Do you remember creating art as a child? What visual arts activities do you enjoy as an adult? Take a moment to reflect...

The Power of Visual Art

Creating visual art is fun AND beneficial for young children (and for people of all ages)! For example, visual art experiences offer opportunities for your child to:

- create and strengthen neural connections in the brain (e.g., while exploring the textures of finger paint and sandpaper). These kinds of experiences in early childhood actually help “wire up” the brain!
- build vocabulary (especially as children discuss the lines, colors, shapes, and textures of their art with others).
- stimulate creativity and imagination (especially when you provide and encourage use of open-ended art materials instead of coloring books).
- learn science concepts when experimenting with cause and effect (such as when mixing colors or pounding clay).
- learn math concepts such as size and shape.
- develop the fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination needed to write (while scribbling and rolling clay snakes).
- express ideas, feelings, and emotions.
- develop self-confidence and a positive self-esteem (especially when you value your child’s artwork by making appropriate comments and displaying the work proudly—even scribbles).
- make decisions and problem solve (when making choices about colors and content and figuring out how to achieve the result they want, such as the best way to attach an object to a collage).

Art Is Part of Learning in Early Childhood

Published in 2003, the *Kentucky Early Childhood Standards* were developed to help all early childhood programs understand appropriate expectations for young children from birth to age five, and provide appropriate experiences that support overall growth and development.



Kentucky Early Childhood Standards for Visual Arts

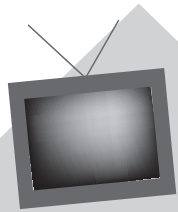
| Birth to Three | Three-and Four-Year-Olds |
|--|--|
| <p>Creative Expression Standard: Demonstrates interest and participates in various forms of creative expression.</p> <p>This means that between the ages of birth and three years, your child should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enjoy the natural beauty around him or her.• As a toddler, enjoy creating his or her own art using crayons, chalk, and other materials.• Participate in art activities that give him or her opportunities to be creative and develop important thinking skills. | <p>Arts & Humanities Standard: Participates and shows interest in a variety of visual arts, dance, music, and drama experiences.</p> <p>This means that between the ages of three and four years, your child should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop skills in creating various types of art, dance, music, and drama.• Have opportunities to participate in the creative art process through many activities that involve art (painting, drawing), music, dance, and drama (theater, dramatic play, puppets). |

Implementing the ideas and activities discussed in this training will help your child meet the Kentucky Early Childhood Standards.

Kentucky has also published *Early Childhood Parent Guides*. These were developed to help you understand the standards and ways you can support your child's growth and development in partnership with your child's caregiver. You can use the information in the *Parent Guides* to:

- understand how your child is growing and learning.
- plan special activities for your child that can assist in growth and learning.
- think about your typical day and how you can use your family routines to support your child's growth and development.
- talk with your child's caregiver about the skills they are working on with your child, to share ideas about how you can work together to help your child develop new skills, and to make sure that all areas of your child's development are being addressed.

To download a copy of the complete *Parent Guide* (available in English and Spanish), go to the Kentucky Department of Education web site www.kde.ky.us/kde, choose Instructional Resources, then Early Childhood Development, then Building a Strong Foundation for School Success Series.



Create an Artful Environment

Video Segment: The Arts at Home

Cyndi Young and her four-year-old daughter, Georgia, have fun with the arts in their home on a regular basis. As you watch this segment from Program 1 of the *Art to Heart* series, note your answers to these questions:

1. What activities do you see Cyndi and her daughter doing together? _____

2. According to Cyndi, what are some of the benefits to her and her daughter of visual arts activities? _____

3. How do the activities shown differ from using a coloring book or making a craft that has specific directions? _____

4. How does Cyndi limit messiness? _____

Four Ways to Create an Artful Environment

- Create space to for art activities.
- Provide age-appropriate art supplies.
- Plan age-appropriate art activities.
- Display your children’s artwork.

You don’t have to spend a lot of money to create an artistic space in which your child can safely experience the joy of making art.

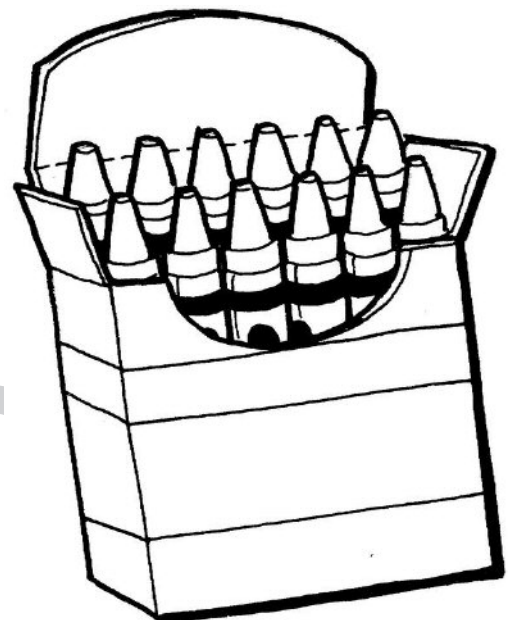
- Choose an area with a non-carpeted floor (e.g., kitchen, laundry room). And don’t forget about the outdoors.
- Organize art materials so they are accessible. Keep basic paper, markers, crayons, and other materials in an “Art Box” or “Art Drawer.”
- For inspiration, display prints, posters, or post-cards of famous paintings and other artwork.
- To protect against spills, cover the table and/or floor with a plastic table cloth, large garbage bag, plastic tarp, or old plastic shower curtain. Adult t-shirts work well as art smocks.
- To avoid lost marker caps and dried-out markers, create a marker holder. Fill a container (such as an egg carton, ice tray, or shallow plastic container) with Plaster of Paris. Press marker caps into the Plaster of Paris with the open end of the cap sticking up. After the Plaster of Paris dries, stick the marker into the caps. Encourage your child to stick a marker “back in its hole” before using a different marker.
- When possible, create art with your child or encourage your child to make art while you are nearby (e.g., cooking dinner or doing laundry). Messes are most likely to happen when children are unsupervised.

- Have plenty of wet wipes or a spray bottle of water and paper towels nearby.
- For more ideas about creating an art space in your home, watch an online video about setting up an art space at home:
www.crayola.com/theartofchildhood/art-room.cfm.
- Make your own unique chalk or dry-erase boards. Purchase a can of chalk paint or dry erase paint at any home improvement store and paint a place mat, the back of a low shelf, a box or a pizza box.

What Kinds of Materials Are Needed?

Put away the coloring books and “make-and-take” craft instructions. Instead, provide basic age-appropriate, non-toxic art supplies that encourage creativity.

- **Paper:** Collect paper in a variety of colors, shapes, and sizes (such as white paper, construction paper, newspaper, junk mail, wrapping paper, index cards, textured paper, paper plates, manila folders, shelf lining paper, left-over wall paper, coffee filters, sand paper, magazines, corrugated cardboard). The younger the child, the larger the paper should be. Brown paper bags and newspaper work well for scribbling toddlers. It also helps to tape the paper down.



- **Child safety scissors**

- **Crayons, markers, chalk, and pencils:** The younger the child, the larger the drawing tools should be. Provide different types of markers with different shaped tips, but make sure they are washable. Try these ideas for a little crayon variety:

- Bundled crayons:** Bundle 2-3 crayons with tape to make one large crayon that will leave multiple lines of different colors.

- Muffin crayons:** Remove paper from broken crayons. Break into small pieces. And place in paper cupcake liners in muffin pan. Melt in oven at very low temperature. Make solid color crayons or rainbow crayons by using multiple colors in the same cupcake liner.

Hint: Drawing can take place anywhere. Keep a backpack filled with sketchbooks, markers, pencils, and crayons in the car. This could prove to be a lifesaver while waiting at the doctor's, sitting in traffic, or driving to take care of errands.



- **Glue:** Glue sticks are easiest to use and least messy. Paste sometimes works best for making collages. When using liquid glue, pour a small amount into a small container and apply with a paint brush or Q-tip.

- **Paint:** Watercolors, tempera, and finger paint

- all provide very different kinds of sensory experiences for your child, so allow him/her to experiment with all three. To provide texture, add coffee grinds, oatmeal, sand, or salt. Infants and toddlers enjoy finger painting with non-toxic finger paint, pudding, or even shaving cream. Paint is now available with different types of applicators that minimize the possibility of messiness. For no-mess painting, paint with water on brown paper bags, the sidewalk, or fence! Or a paint with shaving cream in the bathtub.

- **Brushes:** Provide a variety of brushes. Encourage your child to use a separate brush for each color. With early supervision, you can teach your child not to muddy the paint by keeping each brush with its own color. That way the color experimentation is on the paper where your child can see it and control it. Almost anything can be a brush, so let your child experiment painting with different types of materials like feathers, cotton swabs, toy cars (the wheels), sponges, yarn, etc.
- **Play dough:** Make your own play dough using the recipe below. The result is just like store-bought play dough. Provide tools such as cookie cutters, a child-sized rolling pin or dowel rod, Popsicle sticks, blunt knife, garlic press, etc. Use plastic placemats or cookie sheets to provide a defined workspace.

Homemade play dough: Mix 2 cups water, 1 cup salt, 2 cups flour, food coloring, and 4 teaspoons cream of tartar in a large bowl or blender until the lumps disappear. Then, mix in 1/4 cup vegetable oil. Put the entire mixture into a sauce pan and “cook” it over low heat until it clumps together. Pour out the mixture and let it cool. Then knead. Store in plastic zippered bags. You can also use Kool-aid to add color and scent.

- **Collage and sculpture materials:** Good collage and sculpture materials include old magazines (to cut up); various colors and shapes/sizes of paper and stickers; and objects like wire, chenille rods, cotton balls, yarn, beads, beans, and buttons. (However, be mindful of choking hazards.)
- **Stamping materials:** The craft sections of stores have a wide variety of rubber stamps and washable ink pads. You can also use stamps made from potato or vegetable halves (adult cuts the design into vegetable) or bingo marker bottles, which come in a variety of colors with a sponge head that makes circular designs.

Encourage Your Child to Try These Simple Creative Ideas

- **Wet Chalk Pictures:** Paint a dark sheet of construction paper with water. Then, draw on the wet paper using chalk.
- **Crayon Resist:** Scribble hard using a crayon that is the color of the paper (e.g., white crayon on white paper). Then, using watercolors, paint over the scribbles.
- **Crayon Rubbings:** Place a variety of flat objects on the table (e.g., keys, leaves, coins). Place a piece of paper over the objects and rub a crayon. The objects will appear like magic! For more rubbing fun, glue yarn into shapes or letters of the alphabet on a piece of construction paper or cardboard. After it dries, place a piece of paper over the yarn and rub with a crayon.
- **Coffee Filter Art:** Create colored water using food coloring. Drip the colored water onto coffee filters using a straw or eye dropper. Talk about how different colors are made when colors combine.

- **String Painting:** Pour tempera paint into a small, shallow container. Cut several lengths of string or yarn. Drag the string through the paint, then paint with the wet string.
- **Blob Pictures:** Fold a piece of construction paper in half. Drop some paint into the fold of the paper. Then, close the paper, and “smush” the paint around. Open the paper back up to reveal a modern art masterpiece!
- **Track Painting:** Pour tempera paint into a pie pan, Styrofoam tray, cookie sheet, or paper plate. “Drive” a small toy vehicle through the paint and then make tracks on a sheet of paper.
- **Dots and Lines:** Make dots all over a piece of paper using markers, crayons, or paint. Then, draw lines to connect all the dots and color in the spaces.
- **Thumb Prints:** Place a drop of water onto each color of a tray of watercolors. Press thumb into the paint, then onto a piece of paper. After the thumbprint dries, use crayons or markers to create faces or imaginative creatures.



Make Your Own Art Gallery!

Display your child's artwork in a way that shows you value it. Place it in a pretty frame and hang it in a prominent location in your home. Label the artwork like a museum does, with artist's name, title, type of art (e.g., painting, collage, chalk drawing), and year created. Ideas include:

- Display favorite pieces in picture frames.
- Use construction or wrapping paper to "frame" pictures.
- Use a cork board to create a gallery space and display your child's favorite pieces. Rotate frequently.
- Use a photo album or scrap book to create an art book of your child's favorite art pieces.



Art Is Even More Fun When You Do It Together

Some fun art activities for parents and children to do together are:

- Draw portraits of each other.
- Paint together. Either you or your child makes the first shape. Then take turns embellishing around it until you have filled the page.
- Draw pictures about family experiences – from day-to-day activities to special activities such as outings or vacations.
- Encourage your child to make up a story, and then draw pictures to “illustrate” the story.
- Start a new family tradition. Once a week, turn off the TV, bring out the art supplies, and spend time creating art together.
- Read books about art and artists together.

Go to:

-www.rif.org/educators/books/museum.msp for a list of children’s books about visiting museums.

-www.journal.naeyc.org/btj/200407/CreativeArtsBooksForYC.pdf for a list of children’s books about art and artists.

- Go to museums together and talk about which pieces you each like. The following articles suggest ways to make museum visits enjoyable learning experiences for the entire family:
 - Museums: Hands-on and More (www.naeyc.org/ece/1999/01.pdf)
 - Playing 101: Tips for Taking the Family to Child-Friendly Museums (www.early-childhoodnews.com; click Articles, then search)
 - Reading Is Fundamental’s Guide to Artistic Adventures (www.rif.org/assets/Documents/parents/artisticadventures.pdf)

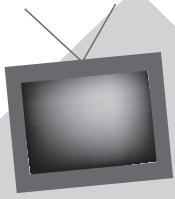
- Preschoolers and Museums: An Educational Guide. (www.ket.org/arttoheart/program1/museumtypes.htm)

- Look for and talk together about the art all around you, from what’s hanging on the walls in your house to illustrations in books to pretty gardens or views you see through your windows. Talk about what you see by describing the types of lines, colors, shapes, forms, and textures.
- Look at a painting and make up a story about what’s happening in the picture (e.g., pretend to be a person or object in the picture who tells what is happening in the picture).
- Create a collage or sculpture using paper scraps and other objects from around the house. Try creating a sculpture with gumdrops or styrofoam packing pieces and toothpicks. If you’re feeling adventurous, check out the following *Art to Heart* web pages, where you will find detailed instructions for these low-mess sculpture activities:

-Plaster Masks and Plaster Bag Sculpture: www.ket.org/arttoheart/program1/artathome.htm

- Stepping Stones: www.ket.org/arttoheart/pdf/stepping-stone.pdf





Understand and Value All Stages of Drawing

Video Segment: *From Scribbles to Storytelling*

In this segment from program 2 of the *Art to Heart* series, Martin Rollins, Associate Curator of Education Programs at Louisville's Speed Art Museum, explains how children's drawing abilities progress through a series of four stages. As you watch this segment, make notes about these questions:

1. At approximately what age do shapes become imaginative creatures or objects? _____

2. How can understanding these four stages of drawing help you better support your child's art making? _____

3. At which stage of drawing is your child currently? _____

Stages of Drawing

Children's drawings (and paintings) typically progress through the following four stages:

Scribbling

Young artists begin by scribbling. This usually happens around 18 months of age. At first this is just for the pleasure of moving their arms and making marks. Over time, children begin to realize they can control the scribbling and they start to draw lines, circles, and shapes. They are experimenting and exploring their ability to make marks. Motions are usually large (that's why large crayons/markers and big pieces of paper are great for toddlers). Eventually, toddlers begin to name their scribbles (that explosion of loopy lines may be your child's version of "Mommy.")

Pre-Symbolic Stage

After scribbling, children move on to what is called the "pre-symbolic" stage. In this stage they begin to realize that what they draw can be a symbol; it can stand for or represent things, people, or ideas. They start drawing what looks like "tad-pole people" with a circle for the head and two lines for legs. Objects tend to "float" on the page because children don't necessarily organize things with a top or a bottom at this stage. Colors are chosen because the child likes them, not because something is actually that specific color.

Symbolism Stage

As children move into early elementary school, they move into the “symbolism” stage. Their fanciful, free-form drawings give way to use of recognizable symbols that represent specific things in the world around them: A square with a triangle on top becomes a house; circles with lines become “lollipop trees;” and a blue line at the top of the page is the sky.

Children in this stage often repeat those visual symbols over and over in their drawings. The appearance of a baseline (a green line that represents the ground) indicates a better understanding of how objects relate to each other. Now objects that once floated on the page are more likely to be drawn closer to reality (for example, the sun is in an upper corner, houses are on the ground.)

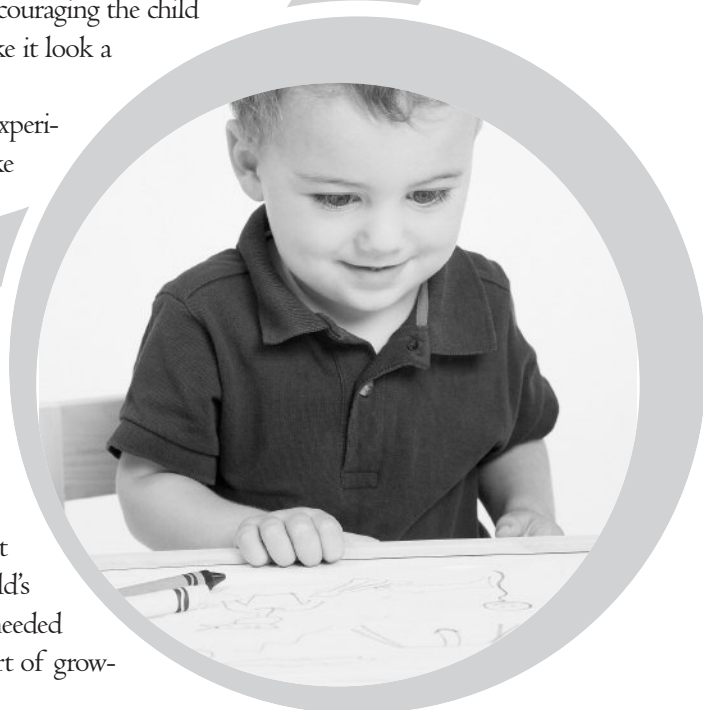
Realism

From around third grade until the time they become teenagers, children become very concerned with realism, trying to make their drawings look exactly as the object really looks. Unfortunately at this stage, many children become frustrated and give up drawing because they don't have the skills to make their drawings look “right.”

Some Things to Do at Each Stage of Drawing

You can nurture your child's creativity at each stage, first, by understanding the stages and then through activities and responses that encourage your child in a way appropriate to his or her level.

- **At the scribbling stage**, provide your child with nontoxic crayons/markers/fingerpaint and paper and then develop a “hands-off attitude.” At this age your child doesn't need coaching or suggestions—they're discovering things on their own. You can be supportive by offering oohs and ahhs and simply describing what you see in their scribbles, for example, “You've drawn blue and yellow lines.” Ask them to tell you about their drawings but don't ask what the drawing is (the most likely answer would be a shrug, or “I don't know,” or “Nothing.”) Help your toddler “learn to see” the world around them by describing to them things you see together. (For example, “Look at the big red ball.”) Read to them from books with vivid illustrations.
- **As your child moves from toddlerhood to the preschool years**, give them lots of opportunities to be creative—drawing materials, clay, even scraps and old boxes can be used to make art. Give them lots of experiences to inspire their work, such as outings to the zoo or a baseball game. Encourage them to express their responses to these. Steer clear of craft-type activities in which the child makes a pre-determined product. Art at this age should be open-ended—encouraging the child to draw or create what he or she wants to without trying to make it look a specific way.
- **In the early years of school**, children benefit greatly from arts experiences and activities with adults. Take them to museums and make art together at home. They also enjoy reading about artists. Encourage your child's self-expression without getting hung up about how you think the art “should” look.
- **As your child becomes older** and more concerned about how his or her artwork looks, continue to be encouraging. This would be a good age for classes to help your child build his or her skills. Continue to take your child to museums and galleries—showing them that there are a wide range of styles in art; there's not just one way for it to look “right.”
- **At every stage**, display your child's artwork proudly! And respect his or her creativity and individuality—at each stage of your child's growth and development, his or her art reflects what he or she needed to create at that moment, so it's a very special and important part of growing up.



Beyond Coloring Books

In the article *Can You See What I See? Cultivating Self-Expression*, the National Association for the Education of Young Children encourages parents to:

“Limit the use of coloring books. Preprinted coloring books may keep children quietly occupied, but they block creative impulses and do not teach fine motor control. It’s better to have children draw their own pictures and color them by staying within their own lines.”

Encourage Scribbling!

“Scribbles are to drawing [and writing] what babbling is to language and what crawling is to walking...As significant as the first words, first scribbles represent children’s march toward symbolic communication, without which they could neither read nor write.” (Hirsh-Pasek & Golinkoff, 2007)

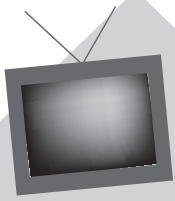
Scribbling is very important. While those random marks may seem meaningless to you, they represent your child’s first step to drawing and writing. Scribbling provides your child the opportunity to develop the small muscles in their hands and develop eye-hand coordination needed to write. Scribbling also leads to an awareness that marks on a page can represent an object. This understanding is a key step in the process of learning to read and write. (Mack, n.d.)

Eventually your child will begin to name the scribbles, and then later, will want to label the people and objects represented in the drawing. That’s why children’s first attempt at writing frequently occurs when they “scribble-write” a label or caption for a drawing, then “read aloud” what they



“wrote.” These labels and captions become the first reading material that children write or “author” themselves. (Baghban, 2007)

In their beautiful book, *Celebrate the Scribble*, Hirsh-Pasek and Golinkoff urge parents to value the stage of scribbling and to encourage artistic exploration and creativity. Hirsh-Pasek and Golinkoff believe that artistic play during childhood will prepare children for tomorrow’s world in which “creative thinkers will rule” and that “By celebrating the scribble, we nurture the next generation of thinkers and builders, inventors and entrepreneurs.”



How to Respond to Children's Artwork

Video Segment: I Picture You, You Picture Me

In this segment from Program 6 of the *Art to Heart* series, Louisville artist Dionisio Ceballos and his daughter, Emilia, draw together. Ceballos talks about the importance of spending time with his daughter and allowing her to explore and create as opposed to instructing her or criticizing her.

As you watch this segment, make notes about these questions:

1. What stands out to about the father's attitude toward his child's art?

2. What is more important to the father, the process or the final product? _____

3. Why does Ceballos try to avoid offering an opinion about his daughter's work? _____

4. What does Ceballos have to say about watching TV? _____

What Do You Say?

Here are some things to keep in mind when responding to your children's artwork:

Describe what you see the child do and what you see in the child's picture. Talk about how your child used different types of lines, colors, shapes, forms, and textures. This builds vocabulary and helps children "learn to see" visual details. For example:

It makes me think of...

You drew five red circles at the top of your page.

That blue line is wavy like the ocean.

You are making a darker shade of blue by adding the black paint.

I see a pattern of red circles and blue lines.

The sand in the paint makes the picture look rough.

The line you drew at the top of your paper looks like it is bending.

The bright, yellow sun you painted is the emphasis of your picture. It is the first thing that my eyes saw.

Your picture is very balanced. It has the same number of trees on both sides.

Gently encourage your child to talk about the process, materials used, sequence of activities, elements of art and the result. But use this sparingly; if your young artist doesn't want to talk or answers "I don't know," don't push. For example:

Tell me about your picture. How did you get that color of green?

How did you draw your picture? What did you do first?

How does the clay feel to you?

- **Avoid "what is it?" questions** that assume your child intended the picture to represent something. Maybe he or she did, or maybe not. Learn to value the process more than the product. Young children's art is more about the **process** of exploring and experimenting with art materials (e.g., mixing colors or squishing play dough) than it is about creating a **product**. Asking "What is it?" implies that your child was supposed to produce something specific and may dampen the joy he or she experienced while mixing colors and experimenting with different types of lines. It is also important to avoid the temptation to tell or show your child how to "make it look right." Fearing that they can't draw or sing or dance is one reason some children stop doing art activities around third grade. Remember that your child is exploring, experimenting, and learning to express him- or herself. And that should be fun!
- **Avoid creating "praise junkies"** by using statements that imply judgments such as "I really like your picture." Or "Your picture is pretty." Asking questions that encourage your child to talk about his or her work or commenting on a specific aspect of the work ("I like all those bright colors") or the process ("It looks like you had fun as you pounded the clay flat") will be more encouraging than profusely praising every activity. Over-praising can actually create pressure on children; they worry that they will have to produce something that pleases you every time!



Art Is Shared Love

In program 8 of the *Art to Heart* series, Louisville artist Victor Sweatt reminds parents that they are their child's first teacher and that simple arts activities can be a wonderful way for parents and children to enjoy time together and build emotional connections. Parents can, Sweatt says, teach love by taking the time to slow down and experience art with their child. According to Sweatt, activities don't have to be complicated to be enjoyable. He and his three-old daughter enjoy coloring together and making projects. "I let her use different supplies, fabrics, paints, just let her explore. She may line up blades of grass and make a train. Or take a stick and draw in the dirt and use rocks for eyes. She may want to paint right over what she has just done, even though I think it's beautiful. I think the key is to let them make something out of nothing, to try new things, and to slow down and relax."

Action Plan

Reflect on what you've learned and your experiences during this session.

1. List two or three things you have learned.

2. List two or three things you want to begin doing to support your young artist.

Find Out More

If you enjoyed this session you may want to watch the Art to Heart programs. There are programs on drama, music, and dance as well as visual arts. The Art to Heart series sometimes air on KET and are also available on DVD. For information, visit the Art to Heart web site www.ket.org/arttoheart.

The web site includes a downloadable viewing guide and many additional tips, activities, and links.

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